$4.25
(CANADA $5.25)

FIRST THINGS

NOVEMBER 2001
NUMBER 117

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

"Salvation Is from the Jews"

EDWARD T. OAKES

Stanley Fish's Milton

THOMAS G. WEINANDY

Does God Suffer?

CAPITAL AND OTHER PUNISHMENTS *Gilbert Meilaender*
DARWIN AND THE DESCENT OF MORALITY *Benjamin Wiker*
PILGRIM MEETS COMPASSIONATE *J. Budziszewski*
MEMENTO MORTIMER *Ralph McInerny*

ALSO: *September 11—Before and After*

Stephen M. Barr on The Quantum Brain • George McKenna

Naomi Schaefer • Paul R. McHugh • Damon Linker

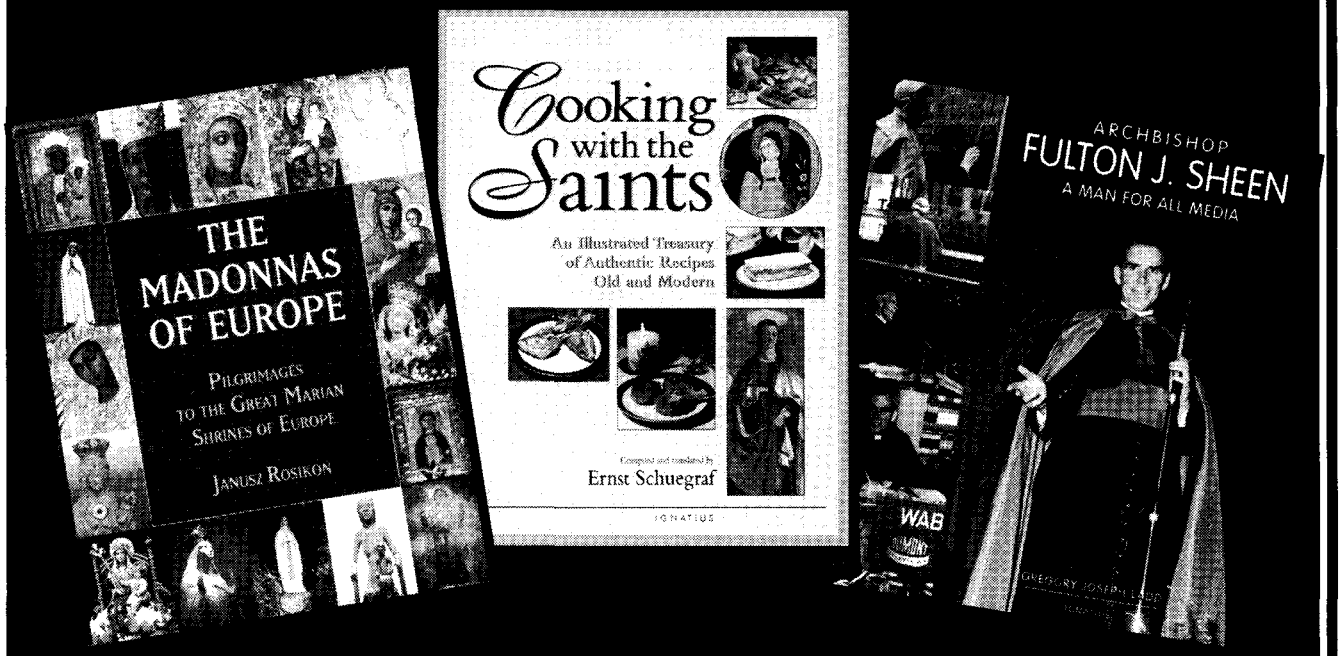
0 74851 64655 7

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



THREE LAVISH GIFT BOOKS

THE MADONNAS OF EUROPE

Pilgrimages to the Great Marian Shrines

Janusz Rosikon

A glorious, extra large 11 x 14 deluxe volume of more than 200 original photos of 70 Marian Shrines throughout Europe. Renowned Catholic photographer Janusz Rosikon spent five years making pilgrimages to these sanctuaries, and he captures the devout faith and moving stories of pilgrims, as well as the unique and transcendent splendor of the beauty of each Marian shrine. Completely unique in its beauty, size, original photos and inspiring text, this gorgeous volume is a wonderful tribute to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

300 pages, Deluxe Hardcover, $49.95

COOKING WITH THE SAINTS

An Illustrated Treasury of Authentic Recipes Old and Modern

Ernst Schuegraf

This richly illustrated treasure of recipes from 21 countries celebrates the Catholic tradition of honoring saints with special meals and recipes on their feast days. Some 73 saints' lives are depicted here with over 170 recipes that cover a broad spectrum of dishes that includes main courses, side dishes, soups, snacks, breads and desserts. This lavish cookbook is also filled with color pictures of each dish, as well as each saint. It offers a cooking glossary and four indices of recipes.

330 pages, 9 x 12 Sewn Hardcover, $29.95

FULTON J. SHEEN

A Man for All Media

Greg Ladd

Archbishop Fulton Sheen is widely considered to be the most influential Catholic of 20th century America. Millions watched his incredibly popular television series every week, and countless people have read his more than sixty books. This is a wonderful coffee-table book filled with over 125 original photos of the great archbishop, combined with inspiring quotes from Sheen on every kind of spiritual topic. These photos and quotes capture the joy, zeal for the faith and dramatic flair that made him such an effective communicator and missionary to all souls.

150 pages, 9 x 11 Sewn Hardcover, $24.95

ignatius press

P.O. Box 1339, Ft. Collins, CO 80524

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Qty		Total
___	**THE MADONNAS OF EUROPE** - $49.95 . . .	_____
___	**COOKING WITH THE SAINTS** - $29.95 . . .	_____
___	**FULTON J. SHEEN** - $24.95	_____
	Shipping/Handling $4.00 per book	_____
	TLGB-FTH Total Enclosed	_____

CREDIT CARD ORDERS 1-800-651-1531 OR ORDER ONLINE AT: WWW.IGNATIUS.COM

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

NOVEMBER 2001 • Number 117

CORRESPONDENCE 2 Violence, abortion, and government; a challenge to "modern Orthodoxy"; NEA as whipping boy?; secular ethos, secular state

THIS TIME 6 *Damon Linker* Going to Pot?

OPINION 8 *Gilbert Meilaender* Capital and Other Punishments

10 *Benjamin Wiker* Darwin and the Descent of Morality

13 *J. Budziszewski* Pilgrim Meets Compassionate

14 *Ralph McInerny* Memento Mortimer

ARTICLES 17 *Richard John Neuhaus* "Salvation Is from the Jews"

23 *Edward T. Oakes* Stanley Fish's Milton

35 *Thomas G. Weinandy* Does God Suffer?

BOOKS 43

Stephen M. Barr The Quantum Brain: The Search for Freedom and the Next Generation of Man by Jeffrey Satinover

George McKenna Transgressing the Bounds: Subversive Enterprises Among the Puritan Elite in Massachusetts, 1630-1692 by Louise A. Breen

Naomi Schaefer Quality with Soul by Robert Benne; Religion on Campus by Conrad Cherry, Betty A. DeBerg, and Amanda Porterfield

Paul R. McHugh Handbook of Religion and Health by Harold Koenig et al.

Damon Linker Christian Faith and Modern Democracy by Robert Kraynak

. . . *and* Briefly Noted

THE PUBLIC SQUARE 65 A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

This Month: September 11—Before and After, *etc.*

Poetry by *Robert Greer Cohn* (5)

Editor-in-Chief: *Richard John Neuhaus*
Editor: *James Nuechterlein*
Associate Editor: *Damon Linker*
Managing Editor: *Alicia Mosier*
Editorial Assistant: *Matthew Rose*
Poetry Editor: *J. Bottum*
Publisher: *Institute on Religion and Public Life*
Publishing Service: *Publishing Management Associates*

First Things (ISSN #1047-5141) is published monthly (except for combined issues June/July and August/September) for $34 per year ($14.97 for students) by The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing office. POSTMASTER: send address changes to First Things, P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Editorial Offices:** The Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010. **Editorial Phone:** (212) 627-1985. **Email:** ft@firstthings.com. **Website:** http://www.firstthings.com. **Advertising Offices:** 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, IL 61108. **Advertising Phone:** (815) 398-8569. **Email:** firstthingsadsales@pma-inc.net. **Subscription Department:** P.O. Box 401, Mt. Morris, IL 61054. **Subscription Phone:** 1-877-905-9920. **Email:** frth@kable.com. Unsolicited material cannot be returned unless accompanied by sufficient return postage. Newsstand distribution by Eastern News Distributors, Inc., One Media Way, 12406 Rt. 250, Milan, OH 44846.

Copyright © 2001 by the Institute on Religion and Public Life. All rights reserved. Produced in the USA.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

FIRST THINGS

FIRST THINGS is published by Religion and Public Life, an interreligious, nonpartisan research and education institute whose purpose is to advance a religiously informed public philosophy for the ordering of society.

EDITORIAL BOARD

Midge Decter
Mary Ann Glendon
Stanley Hauerwas
Gilbert Meilaender
David Novak
Michael Novak
George Weigel

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD

Hadley Arkes
Stephen M. Barr
James Burtchaell
David Dalin
Thomas Derr
Jean Bethke Elshtain
James Finn
Ernest Fortin
Elizabeth Fox-Genovese
Suzanne Garment
Robert George
Carl F. H. Henry
Russell Hittinger
Leonid Kishkovsky
Glenn Loury
George Marsden
Robert Louis Wilken

Correspondence

Violence and the Defense of Life

Alas, FIRST THINGS seems intent on remaining merely a scholarly magazine hovering above the fray on the topic of abortion. A more apt name would be Safe Things. You have tried twice now in less than a year to steer clear of being a magazine that moves the pro-life agenda forward.

As I began reading Carson Holloway's much-needed rebuttal ("Serpents, Doves, and Abortion," June/July) of James K. Fitzpatrick's act of cowardice regarding abortion that appeared in an earlier issue ("A Pro-Life Loss of Nerve?" December 2000), I was heartened to see the author's diplomatic skewering of Fitzpatrick's argument. It appeared at first that your publication was attempting to recover its integrity with a second look at the topic. Unfortunately, after aborting Fitzpatrick's poor reasoning, Holloway himself produced such eager justification of the status quo that it too ought to be critiqued in some future issue.

Instead of searching for an effective approach to stopping abortion, Holloway sets out to find "other reasons why pro-lifers do not and should not turn to violence." As if the problem were not abortion, but the possible violence of the anti-abortionists!

Holloway madly scrambles away from having his arguments construed as a "preemptive surrender to all manner of future evil." Is it not enough that his arguments are a complete surrender to all manner of current evil?

Jim Gooding
Dearborn, Michigan

The analogies used by Carson Holloway and James K. Fitzpatrick concerning the use of violence against abortionists don't quite hit the nail on the head. The analogies—a madman running through a maternity ward killing babies, genocidal actions that could possibly be thwarted by military intervention, etc.—have to do with situations in which there clearly would be a threat to the public.

But abortion as homicide does not fit into this category. I can defend myself against someone threatening my life, and the law will generally allow this. But usually neither I nor the public in general is threatened in any immediately obvious way by a woman who aborts her fetus. Possibly if the father were to use force to prevent the abortion of his own child the situation would be sufficiently public for the law to come down on his side. Possibly if I knew that my physician was performing abortions, I would have grounds for considering this a sign that he or she could not be entrusted with saving my own life in a critical situation; but the appropriate response would be to change physicians, not to use violence on my physician. And even if the majority were convinced that abortion is immoral, there are limitations as to what can be accomplished by legislative prohibition, as Richard John Neuhaus indicates ("The End of Abortion and the Meanings of 'Christian America,'" Public Square, June/July).

One might consider contraception immoral, but the law can't effectively prohibit the use of contraceptives in the bedroom, as was indicated in the *Griswold v. Connecticut* decision (1965) that paved the way for *Roe v. Wade* (1973); and it would be impossible to enforce laws against private drunkenness, or even against the private use of alcohol, as was discovered in the Prohibition era. It would be useless to make a law that would be ignored by a significant segment of the population, unless we were willing to recruit

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and pay for a massive increase in police personnel, and edge precariously in the direction of a police state.

I think the only chance for effective and enforceable legislation against abortion would have two requirements: a constitutional amendment declaring the fetus a person, while allowing exceptions for abortion in cases of rape, incest, and threats to the mother's life, which are stumbling blocks for many who are otherwise pro-life. In such a legal milieu, actions might be taken against physicians for performing abortions where there were clearly no such extenuating circumstances. But the law would have to stop short of prosecuting a woman using an abortifacient pill to expel her fetus. This would seem to be a unique and anomalous case of purely private homicide.

Professor Howard Kainz
Department of Philosophy
Marquette University
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Carson Holloway replies:

It requires not careful scrutiny but only a minimally attentive reading of my article to see that I offer no "eager justification of the status quo," that I do regard abortion as a serious problem, and that I am concerned with how to combat it effectively. It seems completely to have escaped Mr. Gooding that the formulation of some credible ground on which to reject the use of unlawful violence might itself be a necessary element of "an effective approach to stopping abortion."

Indeed, his letter is based on the assumptions, never defended by any argument, that violence is the only effective way to stop abortion (hence his belief that my repudiation of violence amounts to a "complete surrender") and that those who fail to see this are not only in error but also morally corrupt (hence his doubts about FT's "integrity" and his supposition of James K. Fitzpatrick's "cowardice"). Yet the truth of such assumptions is far from evident and is in fact denied by most pro-lifers. Mr. Gooding is disappointed at FT's aspiration to be "merely a scholarly magazine." He needs to learn that it is incumbent not only on scholars but on all human beings to defend their positions by reasonable arguments.

If I understand Professor Kainz's letter correctly, he thinks that a private citizen's use of force to stop an abortion would be impermissible even in a society in which the law does in fact forbid abortion, because abortion is not "a threat to the public." This simply assumes, without argument, that the unborn are not, like the hypothetical babies in the maternity ward, part of the public that one may act to protect when the agents of the law are not present and cannot be summoned in time. But why would we deny them such a status if we are positing a society in which the law does in fact protect them? Perhaps Prof. Kainz's misgivings arise from a misapprehension of what form such "force" would take in such circumstances. It would almost certainly not have to be lethal, but would probably only involve restraining an abortionist intent on breaking the law until the authorities could arrive.

Prof. Kainz's comments on the limits to the effectiveness of law, and particularly law that does not enjoy overwhelming public support, are well taken. He goes too far, however, in suggesting that laws that forbid what a sizable minority are determined to do in private must either be useless or a threat to all liberty. A reasonable purpose of law is not to eradicate evils, but sufficiently to discourage them. (The former would require a police state; the latter does not.) Thus a law against the sale and use of abortifacient drugs could simply be applied when violations come to light, and it would not be necessary to destroy privacy by actively ferreting them out.

Finally, Prof. Kainz's proposed pro-life constitutional amendment is incoherent in theory and untenable in practice. It would be difficult, to say the least, to square a constitutional assertion of the personhood of fetuses and maintenance of the Fourteenth Amendment's provision for equal protection of the laws with a constitutional authorization of the use of deadly force against some such persons simply because of the conditions under which they were conceived.

YOU ARE CORDIALLY INVITED TO

the fifteenth annual

ERASMUS LECTURE

presented by

DAVID NOVAK

"Jews, Christians, and Civil Society"

Six o'clock, Monday, November 26, 2001
Union League Club
38 East 37th Street - New York City

Sponsored by
First Things *and the Institute on Religion and Public Life.*
For free ticket(s) (please indicate one or two), write:

Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400,
New York, NY 10010

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

U.S. Postal Service
STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, AND CIRCULATION

1. Title of publication: FIRST THINGS

2. Publication No. 005476.

3. Date of Filing: Sept. 28, 2001

4. Frequency of issue: Monthly except combined issues June/July and August/September.

5. No. of Issues Published Annually: 10.

6. Annual Subscription Price: $34.00

7. Mailing Address of Known Office of Publication: 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010-7002.

8. Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publisher: 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010-7002.

9. Names and Complete Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor. Publisher: Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010-7002. Editor-in-Chief: Richard John Neuhaus. Editor: James Nuechterlein. Managing Editor: Alicia Mosier, Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010-7002.

10. Owner: Institute on Religion and Public Life, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010-7002.

11. Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and Other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or More of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages, or Other Securities: None.

12. The Purpose, Function, and Nonprofit Status of this Organization and the Exempt Status for Federal Income Tax Purposes Has Not Changed During the Preceding 12 Months.

13. Publication Title: FIRST THINGS

14. Issue date for circulation date below:
Average: November 2000 through October 2001
Actual: October 2001

15. Extent and Nature of Circulation:	Avg. No. Copies Each Issue During Preceding 12 Months	Actual No. Copies of Single Issue Nearest to Filing Date
A. Total No. copies (Net Press Run)	32,177	30,575
B. Paid Circulation 1.Through Dealers and Carriers, Street Vendors, and Counter Sales	2,292	3535
2. Paid or Requested Mail Subscriptions	25,805	25,080
C. Total Paid Circulation (Sum of 15B1 and 15B2)	28,097	28,615
D. Free Distribution by Mail	377	404
E. Free Distribution outside the Mail	---	---
F. Total Free Distribution	377	404
G. Total Distribution	28,474	29,019
H. Copies Not Distributed 1. Office Use, Leftovers	2,000	1,556
2. Returns from News Agents	1,703	...
I. Total (Sum of G, H1 and H2)	32,177	30,575
Percent Paid and/or Requested Circulation	98.7	98.6

16. Statement of Ownership will be printed in the November 2001 issue of this Publication.

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS
Editor-in-Chief

Judaism and Modernity

It was a pleasant surprise to read the article "Rabbi Weinberg's Agony" (June/July), written by a friend whose work I have admired, David Singer, on an important subject, the unique life and philosophy of a great twentieth-century rabbi, Yehiel Jacob Weinberg. Singer correctly posits that the vast Torah scholarship and piety of Rabbi Weinberg, combined with his receptivity to some aspects of this-worldly culture, may serve as an inspiring model for contemporary Jewry. Lacking, though, in Singer's analysis and in much of "modern Orthodox" theorizing is the recognition that "modernity," although not without some positive aspects, refers in large part to an era in which a combination of religious, cultural, and political forces have moved Western society from a God-centered to a man-centered worldview.

If "modern Orthodox" Jewish leaders are to "work through the modern experience" (an inevitable and, in my view, commendable endeavor), they must be prepared to condemn its evil doctrines and practices with courage, consistency, lucidity, and, of course, theoretical sophistication.

By analogy to Catholicism: the Church was urged by John XXIII towards "aggiornamento." This "modernization" was to "open windows to the world." Yet what has been forgotten in far too many Catholic circles, with disastrous results, is that these "open windows" must still retain the screens provided by the antimodernist writings of Pius IX (*Quanta Cura*, 1864) and Piux X (*Lamentabili* and *Pascendi*, 1907) in order to keep pollutants out.

Orthodox dialogue with the modern world must always remember the grave philosophical errors and immoral practices that undergird it and have produced the desacralized West we know today.

Rabbi Weinberg was, and I'm sure Mr. Singer is, mindful of this fact. Nonetheless, as we proclaim that bits and pieces of modernity should figure in our Orthodoxy, we must always remember and state that its essential beliefs must not.

Rabbi Meyer Schiller
Spring Valley, New York

The NEA's Culture

After reading Michael Linton's article on the National Endowment for the Arts and cultural rights ("The Blight of Cultural Rights," June/July), I at first found myself in agreement that the NEA should, at long last, be abolished. On reflection, however, I changed my mind.

There seems to be something missing in Professor Linton's argument. He asks if it is legitimate that tax dollars be spent on the work of gay artist David Wojnarowicz. The dilemma, he suggests, is that Wojnarowicz's notion of culture is clearly different from, say, that of an evangelical Christian. The solution to the whole problem is to abolish the NEA, since it can never be the harbor of a particular culture—it would always be offending someone.

On the surface this seems a reasonable solution. Who is to say what culture or set of values is truly American? No matter what work was produced by a government agency, it would be a given that someone would find it against his deepest convictions. What Prof. Linton misses is that the government cannot *not* take a position. He is falling victim to the myth of the center. The myth is that there is some way that a government (or corporation or church or individual) can avoid having a position. They cannot. They all have positions. Granted, it might not be as blatant as when manifested in a work of art, but nonetheless it is there. Whenever a government agency builds a building, or funds a study, or passes legislation, a cultural and moral position is taken. This is unavoidable. The NEA becomes the whipping boy as it is the most public and literally visible example—art is values objectified,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

morals made into objects. But the government as a whole, too, manifests values in every action it takes (including the action of deciding not to fund the arts). Those values are always at odds with some measure of the populace. A genuine solution then to the tripe that is funded by NEA grants is not to abolish the program but for sensible citizens to do what they do in all other areas of government—fight to make sure that the true and good are pursued and cultivated.

Rod Miller
Hendrix College
Conway, Arkansas

Michael Linton replies:
Professor Miller is quite right. (With three daughters at our dinner table I am regularly reminded of holes in my arguments.) Yes, when the government does something, a position is taken (although I get a bit nervous when we talk about art having a moral dimension). And "we" of orthodox religious views can opt for fighting "to make sure that the true and good are pursued and cultivated." Certainly that is necessary with regard to abortion, religious liberty, and bigotry.

But I'm not sure that it's edifying with regard to things like the NEA. I have many friends and colleagues in the "queer left" whose friendship I value and whose work I esteem. But when we fight over spots at the government trough we all turn piggish. And anyway, for some reason talking about the love of Jesus just doesn't get through when you're snarling about somebody else getting "your" grant. The dilemma is that as citizens we are responsible for how our taxes are spent, but as children of God we're to fundamentally work for His kingdom. With respect to the culture wars, if there were no NEA that area of political contention would be removed and both sides could back off a bit.

Secular Ethos v. Secular State

In his remarks on my recent *Nation* article "Freedom from Religion," Richard John Neuhaus asserts (While We're At It, June/July) that while I favor "a thoroughly secular state in a thoroughly secular society," I acknowledge that "parental choice in education, faith-based social initiatives, and 'the right's sexual-political agenda' do not violate the no-establishment provision of the First Amendment."

He got it half right. I do believe that assaults on secular culture—like the right's sexual conservatism and conspicuous public displays of piety by politicians—are destructive and dangerous but not unconstitutional. In my article, however, I distinguish between a secular *ethos* and a secular *state*—"one that does not fund or otherwise sponsor religious institutions and activities." In my view the latter restriction is indeed required by the First Amendment; and I specifically cite "parochial-school vouchers, charitable choice, and George W.'s new federal office" as violations.

Professor Ellen Willis
Department of Journalism
New York University
New York, New York

Request to Simon

Small persimmons, squashed and tangy sweet
Among dried leaves, in chill vanilla air,
Arrest us on our way along the street
Leading to Maymont grounds. Most trees are bare.
Grandpa, who took us by the hand
To paradise, we beseech you, bring,
In those transparent bottles from so long ago
Filled with water from the Byrd Park spring,
Bring us your blessing, you who know,
Perhaps, what lies beyond that autumn park,
That long-lost and remembered southern land,
As we prepare to leave—for it grows dark—
Guide us, grandpa, take us by the hand.

Robert Greer Cohn

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This Time

Going to Pot?

Damon Linker

It is safe to say that at some point in the not-too-distant future, America will confront the question of whether or not to legalize the use and cultivation of marijuana. A recent poll shows that support for legalization has reached its highest level since the question was first asked thirty years ago, with 34 percent supporting a liberalization of policy. Among political elites there is a growing consensus that the harsh penalties imposed on those who grow, use, and sell marijuana are disproportionate to its harmful effects. Even among conservatives, opinion seems to be shifting. Whether the change should be welcomed is another matter.

In a recent essay for *National Review*, Richard Lowry raises the question of whether marijuana is truly harmful—and he concludes that it isn't, or at least that it is significantly less so than any number of other drugs that are currently legal. Marijuana, he argues, "should be categorized somewhere between alcohol and tobacco on the one hand, and caffeine on the other." As evidence, he first points out that whereas "alcohol and tobacco kill hundreds of thousands of people a year," there is "no such thing as a lethal overdose of marijuana."

While this is certainly true, it is also the case that, strictly speaking, there is no such thing as a "lethal overdose" of tobacco. To the extent that tobacco causes deaths, it does so through the cumulative effects of smoking tobacco-filled cigarettes, cigars, and pipes. Unless Lowry intends to deny that most marijuana users get high through smoking it and that they usually do so without the filters commonly attached to cigarettes, one must assume that marijuana is at least as lethal as tobacco. As for alcohol, while it, unlike marijuana, can cause death when taken in extremely large doses, the same could also be said for such legal substances as aspirin. That it is possible for a drug to be taken in lethal quantities is, then, insufficient to determine whether it is harmful enough to be outlawed.

Much more potent is Lowry's argument against the conventional wisdom that pot is a "gateway drug" to such "harder" substances as LSD, cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin. Reversing accepted assumptions, Lowry denies both that kids who use marijuana go on to experiment with stronger drugs and that those who do so are led to this behavior by the marijuana itself. As he points out, just "because a cocaine addict used marijuana first doesn't mean he is on cocaine *because* he smoked marijuana." To argue in this way is, he claims, to confuse "temporality with causality." It is more likely that children who experiment with drugs of all kinds do so because of a preexisting behavioral problem. It's thus "the kid, not the substance, who is the problem."

Like the NRA's effective campaign to persuade the country that "guns don't kill people, people kill people," Lowry's argument contains much truth. Of course a troubled child is more likely to try drugs than one with a firm sense of right and wrong. But that's far from being the end of the story. Just as a would-be murderer can usually do far more harm with a gun than he could with a less potent weapon, so a child in danger of losing his way can do more damage to himself when drugs are widely available for his use, as they surely would be if they were legalized.

And then there is the question of education. The behavioral problems that Lowry points to as the true cause of drug abuse do not arise in a vacuum. They come about largely from a failure of moral education—by schools, but much more so by parents. As it is, the law provides a small but significant amount of support for parents in their efforts to steer their kids away from drugs. Libertarians may argue that legalization would not undermine those efforts—that it would merely leave it up to individuals to decide for themselves—but as opponents of the unlimited abortion license are well aware, legal neutrality is often far from neutral. When we outlaw some actions (like murder) and permit others (like abortion) we make a crucially important distinction. We teach that the former are unambiguously wrong and that the latter are not. To legalize marijuana is thus to weaken the position of parents who wish to steel their children against the temptation of drug-taking.

But Lowry nevertheless has a point. If it is true that few users of marijuana become users of other drugs, then the rationale for keeping pot illegal has indeed been undermined. Add to this the scientifically established fact that, unlike alcohol, nicotine, and cocaine, marijuana is not physically addictive, and we cannot help but wonder if we should conclude, with Lowry, that marijuana is relatively harmless, and thus that punishing people for using it is "outrageously disproportionate."

In two recent columns for the *New Republic*, Andrew Sullivan goes beyond Lowry's position to declare flatly that "the illegal thing in pot is not THC [its active

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ingredient]; it's pleasure." And this, he claims, is absurd. In a country that increasingly medicates itself with pharmaceuticals, which, like pot, induce pleasure by manipulating chemicals already present in the human body, criminalizing the use and cultivation of marijuana appears to be completely arbitrary. In fact, according to Sullivan, it is only a "residual cultural puritanism" that stands in the way of allowing Americans to pursue "enjoyment" however they wish. "It is bizarre," he writes, "that, in a country founded in part on the pursuit of happiness, we should now be expending so many resources on incarcerating and terrorizing so many people simply because they are doing what their Constitution promised." Sure, he admits, "pleasure isn't the same thing as happiness." But "the responsible, adult enjoyment of . . . pleasure . . . is surely part of it."

The argument is a powerful one. If, in the end, the dispute about legalizing marijuana can be reduced to a conflict between those who support pleasure and those who oppose it, then the prohibitionists have already lost the argument. The Puritans simply won't be winning any elections in twenty-first century America. Nevertheless, we have reason to think that a case against legalization can be based on a less exacting distinction. That is, we can insist on distinguishing among kinds of pleasure, something that, common sense notwithstanding, Lowry and Sullivan each steadfastly refuse to do.

While most people believe that pleasure is a good thing, they also categorize and rank its different types. Some pleasures are subtle, others are intense. Some are best experienced alone, others can be enjoyed only in community. Some are base, others noble. Some are purely physical, while others are inextricably bound up with our higher powers. And then there are those most fulfilling pleasures—the ones that follow from the completion of the highest human endeavors. The late Allan Bloom noted the occasions that tend to elicit such feelings: "victory in a just war, consummated love, artistic creation, religious devotion, and the discovery of truth."

The pleasure of smoking marijuana differs from the kind of pleasure that accompanies smoking a fine cigar or sipping a well-brewed cup of coffee, and more pertinently, it also differs from the pleasure of mild drunkenness. Whereas alcohol primarily diminishes one's inhibitions and clarity of thought, marijuana inspires a euphoria that resembles nothing so much as the pleasure that normally arises only in response to the accomplishment of the noblest human deeds. Marijuana, like the designer drug Ecstasy, whose legalization Sullivan also, revealingly, supports, provides its users with a means to enjoy the rewards of excellence without possessing it themselves. Bloom again: "Without effort, without talent, without virtue, without exercise of the faculties, anyone and everyone is accorded the equal right to the enjoyment of their fruits."

A country that consumes ever-greater doses of mood-altering prescription drugs might not deem this to be a significant problem, but it should. The danger is not merely that seeking happiness through pharmacology cuts us off from the world as it truly is. It is also that the very attempt to reach happiness in such a way must ultimately fail. While Sullivan is right to remark on the distinction between pleasure and happiness, he neglects to follow up on his insight—to think through what it is that separates them. If he had done so, he would have noted that, whereas pleasure involves enjoying something good, happiness arises only when we judge ourselves *worthy* of enjoying it.

This is why such actions as a just military victory can produce happiness, while inhaling marijuana smoke, however pleasurable, can lead only to an ersatz satisfaction—because it involves nothing praiseworthy. Thus it is that, after its effects have worn off, marijuana leaves its users with little more than a feeling of emptiness and a craving for another high to fill it. Hence also the unproductive stupor into which "potheads" frequently fall.

Lowry and Sullivan may be right to claim that marijuana does not lead to physical harm. But it does produce a pathology of the soul. And given the many pathogens that already pollute our culture—as well as our society's salutary prejudice against marijuana—that is reason enough to resist the efforts of some to remove the legal obstacles to getting high. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Opinion

Capital and Other Punishments

Gilbert Meilaender

Events of recent months—in particular, the execution of Timothy McVeigh and, just prior to it, public airing for the first time of audio tapes of executions in Georgia—have focused attention on the morality of the death penalty, even if administered fairly and equitably. For better or worse, we find ourselves at a moment when considerable national attention is being given to the morality of capital punishment, and readers of First Things in recent months have also been invited to reflect upon the issue in an essay by Avery Cardinal Dulles (April) and in a later exchange between Dulles and his critics (August/September).

Although preserving the death penalty is nowhere near the top of my moral concerns, I can think of no persuasive reason—save perhaps one, to which I will come—why a clearly guilty terrorist such as Timothy McVeigh should not be executed. But I think we are often confused about why it may be appropriate—a confusion that manifests itself in our willingness to give therapeutic "closure" to families of victims by allowing those family members to view the execution.

If and when a state inflicts the death penalty on one of its citizens, it is imperative that such action be understood as public, not private, action. For Christians this is because the state, by God's ordinance, is authorized in certain circumstances to serve the common good even by taking the life of a duly convicted criminal. When God makes His covenant with Noah after the great flood, promising never again to destroy "all flesh," this promise is fulfilled in part through government, which, by executing just punishment, enacts fitting retribution for crimes. Hence, what none of us are permitted to do as private citizens on our own authority the state may do—not because it is itself "lord" of life and death, but because it is the authorized agent of the God who is that Lord.

Of course, many of our fellow citizens will not understand the work of government in terms grounded in Genesis 9 and Romans 13. As a people we are more likely to think of government in terms the social contract theorists taught us: as founded to stop the injustice that dominates a state of nature, but founded by our own compact. Even in these terms, however, the distinction between public and private action is crucial. A world in which each of us is permitted to judge guilt and execute punishment, in which revenge and blood feuds are permitted, is likely to be the one Hobbes described—in which the life of man is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." It will be a world given over to injustice.

When, therefore, the state executes a convicted murderer, it is essential that we not think of this as responding to the desires of family or friends of the murderer's victim(s). We are all aggrieved when one of our fellow citizens is murdered, and the criminal's punishment (even execution) satisfies not our need for therapeutic closure but our need for a just society. Opponents of the death penalty will rightly note that there is something paradoxical about punishing the taking of one life by taking another, but, of course, the "takings" are not the same. One is done by a private individual acting simply in his own name; the other is done by public authority acting in the name of us all. The force of the objection depends precisely on blurring—or missing—the difference between private and public action. Moreover, this "paradox"—if we are given to such language—is only the paradox of government generally; for through criminal law government defends freedom by incarcerating lawbreakers and through civil law it defends our property by imposing penalties on those who have harmed it.

Recent Roman Catholic teaching has teetered dangerously close to losing the centrality of the distinction between public and private killing. At one time, of course, the Church clearly taught that civil government may execute criminals. Perhaps recent "developments" amount to nothing more than a suggestion or claim that, in at least most of the world today, there are alternative modes of punishment that are fit retribution and that can protect society against chaos. And I suspect that those most eager to see more than this in recent papal teaching, those most eager to see genuine doctrinal development, are often at least as interested in opening the door for potential doctrinal developments in other cases as they are in the issue of the death penalty.

Nevertheless, they are not wrong to sense that, intentionally or not, a significant shift lies very near at hand. As scholars such as Christian Brugger have argued, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, most particularly in its revised form, seems to treat the death penalty, not primarily in terms of the special public authority of government, but in terms of the moral norms generally used in Catholic moral theology to govern the use of force in private self-defense. According to those norms,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

one may defend oneself against an unjust aggressor, but, if at all possible, this must be done by nonlethal means. It seems to follow—as the Catechism, in turn, seems to say—that if a murderer can be kept from killing again by any means short of execution, the death penalty cannot legitimately be imposed.

I do not say for certain that this is what the Catechism now teaches. I will leave that for others to decide—and, of course, the argument of Cardinal Dulles is that no such drastic change has been intended or made. My concern, though, is to note just how drastic the change would actually be; for what is really at stake here is much more than the question of capital punishment. If we lose the distinction between public, governmental action and private action, we are close to losing a theory of punishment altogether.

Suppose, for the moment, that those who read the Catechism as undertaking a radical development of doctrine are right. And suppose a case in which an angered, grieving mother—heretofore a model citizen—were to shoot to death the man who, driving drunkenly, had killed her young child. This woman, model citizen that she otherwise is, poses no ongoing threat of unjust aggression against which the community need defend itself. Not only need no one contemplate the death penalty for her, we need not even incarcerate her. Indeed, on the theory we are considering it is hard to know on what basis we could rightly incarcerate her. There is no need in her case to do what the Catechism calls "rendering one who has committed an offense incapable of doing harm." We have lost far more than the legitimacy of the death penalty; we have lost the legitimacy of punishment, of public retribution.

All this may be good reason to suppose that the Catechism proposes no such substantial development—and that, even when a criminal has been captured and no longer constitutes a threat to anyone, the appropriate public officials quite rightly render a punishment deemed apt retribution for the crime. Suppose now that the crime is murder. Suppose, even, many murders committed in terrorist fashion by a Timothy McVeigh. It is, under such circumstances, hard for me to find the argument which makes anything less than execution an appropriate punishment.

I suspect that many opponents of the death penalty find it a little hard as well. That is why in McVeigh's case the argument turned in other directions—in particular to whether families of the victims should be permitted to view his execution. Why just the families? some have asked. Why not all of us? Shouldn't we see what we are doing and judge whether we really have the stomach for it? This argument—in the mouths of death penalty opponents committed to the sanctity, or at least equal dignity, of every human being—comes perilously close to suggesting that we should use an execution of one of our fellow citizens as a means to desired ends. We should reject even the faintest whiff of that idea.

There is, moreover, no reason to have any confidence that making a media event of an execution will engender clear and careful thought about the meaning of the death penalty. But neither is there good reason to use the occasion of an execution to provide therapy for those who have been terribly—no doubt irreparably—hurt by the murderer's deed. The intuition that a civil society—which thinks of itself not from above as God's ordinance but from below as a social compact—needs somehow to take responsibility for executing one of its citizens is sound. Equally sound, though, is the intuition that providing therapeutic closure for families begins to lose the crucial fact that we execute because—and only because—our public order has been wronged.

I find myself wondering whether we might not do some justice to the truth of each intuition by requiring at executions a public presence of randomly selected citizens—something like a jury. They would not in their private capacities have been harmed by the convicted murderer. No one could suppose that we were executing a murderer in order to provide them with some private healing. But their presence as the representatives of us all would bear witness to the fact that an execution is not a claim that some of us are more equal than others, but, rather, that—as a public act of punishment undertaken by a legitimate state—it is a different kind of deed altogether. We do not pull rank when we do it, because we do not act and are not present in our private capacities.

Perhaps there remains one reason why we should never execute—not even execute a terrorist such as McVeigh. In Cardinal Dulles' discussion of "Catholicism & Capital Punishment" he argued that public, governmental punishment must finally be understood as "a symbolic anticipation of God's perfect justice." No state, he says, can render final judgment; only God can do that. If, however, we are to understand punishment this way, and especially if we are to understand the death penalty this way, it must truly be understood in relation to God's judgment. For that to be possible, Dulles writes,

> the society must believe in the existence of a transcendent order of justice, which the State has an obligation to protect. This has been true in the past [when government was understood as God's ordinance], but in our day the State is generally viewed simply as an instrument of the will of the governed [as social contract theory would have it]. In this modern perspective, the death penalty expresses not the divine judgment on

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

objective evil but rather the collective anger of the group. The retributive goal of punishment is misconstrued as a self-assertive act of vengeance.

Much in that argument is true, but the last sentences go strangely awry. We should not assume that the death penalty must express a group's collective anger rather than a people's sense of justice. To be sure, it may readily be misunderstood as analogous to a private act of revenge, but so may other modes of punishment that fall short of the death penalty. To claim that execution can only be understood as "a self-assertive act of vengeance" is, once again, to undercut the very notion of government and punishment—all punishment, not just capital punishment.

A better reason for hesitation—a reason that will remind us what is troubling about the death penalty without calling into question the appropriateness of punishment more generally—is one closely related to Dulles' concern, yet slightly different. I had the sense that there was a time when a judge, pronouncing a sentence of death, would say to the condemned, "May God have mercy on your soul." Perhaps that has in fact been done, but, inquiring of several lawyers I was told, "probably only in movies!" Whatever the facts, it directs our attention to something important. Perhaps counterintuitively, and certainly contrary to what many religious people might suggest, I think the death penalty would be least problematic in a genuinely religious society. Camus suggested that capital punishment could be justified only where there was a socially shared religious belief that the final verdict on any person's life is given by God, not by us. In such a society it would be clear that even in executing one of our fellows we do not pull rank. We would know that our verdict could be overturned at the ultimate tribunal. In such a society it would make good sense, having sentenced a convicted man to death, to add, "May God have mercy on your soul."

What of a society in which this could make no sense? In it, Camus thought, execution could only mean elimination from the one community acknowledged by all to exist. And, of course, if execution is equivalent to elimination, it is indeed a godlike act. This, at any rate, is the point that really demands our attention. To the degree that in our public life—as a people—we decline to speak of God, it may be that we—as a people—ought not inflict a death sentence. But it will be very unfortunate indeed if, in our debates about the death penalty, we lose the capacity to articulate clearly the meaning of government, of punishment, and of justice.

GILBERT MEILAENDER *holds the Richard and Phyllis Duesenberg Chair in Theological Ethics at Valparaiso University.*

Darwin and the Descent of Morality

Benjamin Wiker

An important part of the current controversy over the theoretical status of evolutionary theory concerns its moral implications. Does evolutionary theory undermine traditional morality, or does it support it? Does it suggest that infanticide is natural (as Steven Pinker asserts) or is it a bulwark against liberal relativism (as Francis Fukuyama argues)? Does it rest on a universe devoid of good and evil (as Richard Dawkins has bluntly stated) or can it be used to provide a new foundation for natural law reasoning (as Larry Arnhart contends)?

The obvious place to go in the debate is to the source. Darwin himself considered morality of whatever stripe to be a byproduct of evolution, one more effect of natural selection working upon the raw material of variations in the individual. Nature did not "intend" to create any particular type of morality, any more than nature intended to create one certain length of finch beak. Nor does nature "judge" any particular type of morality as long as it does not violate the principle of natural selection. That, as we shall see, allows for such moral leeway that it creates insuperable problems for conservatives who might solicit Darwin's help in their cause.

We find Darwin's account of morality in his *Descent of Man*, a work published after his more famous *Origin of Species*. As should be no surprise, the arguments of the *Origin* provided the theoretical foundations for his natural history of morality in the *Descent*.

True to his naturalist bent, Darwin's natural history of morality (or more properly, moralities) assumed evolution to be true and sought to explain how the existing moral varieties could have evolved in the same way that natural selection had brought about the great variety of existing species.

For Darwin the "moral faculties of man" were not original and inherent, but evolved from "social qualities" acquired "through natural selection, aided by inherited habit." Just as life came from the nonliving, so also the moral came from the nonmoral.

From the beginning, then, Darwin rejected the Christian natural law argument, according to which human beings are moral by nature. Instead, he followed the pattern of the modern natural right reasoning of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, which assumed that human beings were naturally asocial and amoral, and only became social and moral historically. That is why Darwin called his account a natural history of morality.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

For Darwin, in order to become moral we first had to become social. "In order that primeval men, or the ape-like progenitors of man, should have become social," Darwin reasoned, "they must have acquired the same instinctive feelings which impel other animals to live in a body." As with all animal instincts, the "social instincts" of man were the result of variations bringing some benefit for survival.

What we call "conscience" was also the result of natural selection. Darwin described it as a "feeling of dissatisfaction which invariably results . . . from any unsatisfied instinct." Since the "ever-enduring social instincts" were more primitive and hence stronger than instincts developed later, the social instincts were the sources of our feelings of unease when some action of ours violated them. Such feelings of unease, Darwin explained, we now call "conscience."

It might seem that Darwin's arguments for human sociability and the moral conscience could be marshaled to support a conservative moral position. Yet mere "sociality," even with a conscience grounded in evolutionary imperatives, does not at all mean that nature has created a definite moral standard, such as natural law. Quite the reverse. At bottom, everything is variable. As Darwin writes:

> If . . . men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering. Nevertheless the bee, or any other social animal, would in our supposed case gain, as it appears to me, some feeling of right and wrong, or a conscience. . . . In this case an inward monitor would tell the animal that it would have been better to have followed one impulse rather than the other. The one course ought to have been followed: the one would have been right and the other wrong.

The same variability holds as well within the natural history of human moralities as they actually evolved. So, for example, the "murder of infants has prevailed on the largest scale throughout the world, and has met with no reproach." Indeed, "infanticide, especially of females, has been thought to be good for the tribe, or at least not injurious." As for suicide, in "former times" it was "not generally considered as a crime, but rather from the courage displayed as an honorable act. . . . For the loss to a nation of a single individual is not felt." Neither did infanticide or suicide cause the "feeling of dissatisfaction which invariably results . . . from any unsatisfied instinct." Monogamy, too, Darwin informed the reader, was a fairly recent evolutionary phenomenon.

Yet Darwin balked at embracing the relativism he created, and insisted on ranking evolved moral traits. The unhappy result, however, was his espousal of views we would today call racist, and his justification of a program of eugenics.

Ranking evolved moral traits meant ranking the races accordingly. Thus Darwin cheerfully asserted that the "western nations of Europe immeasurably surpass their former savage progenitors and stand at the summit of civilization." As a member of the favored race, Darwin embraced a typically nineteenth-century view of moral progress. "Looking to future generations," he wrote, "there is no cause to fear that the social instincts will grow weaker, and we may expect that virtuous habits will grow stronger, becoming perhaps fixed by inheritance . . . [so that] virtue will be triumphant."

But the engine of evolution, even moral evolution, is natural selection. Therefore, Darwin believed that the evolution of morality would require the extermination of "less fit" races and individuals—a process that could be helped along by artificial selection, or eugenics.

This unsavory conclusion was derived directly from the principles of evolution. We see in animals that, "in regard to mental qualities, their transmission is manifest in our dogs, horses, and other domestic animals. Besides special tastes and habits, general intelligence, courage, bad and good temper, etc., are certainly transmitted. With man we see similar facts." Since different races, like different breeds of dogs or horses, develop different capacities, it followed that distinct gradations in moral capacities would be found among human races.

Whereas St. Thomas' natural law account began from the assumption that all human beings belonged to the same species (and were therefore all subject to the same moral demands), Darwin tried to determine whether human races should be considered distinct species. In the end, he was unsure whether to rank the races "as species or sub-species" but finally asserted that "the latter term appears the most appropriate."

Whether races are species or sub-species, it is easy to see how such reasoning allowed Darwin to rank the races on an evolutionary scale. Because natural selection must be the cause of the existence of different races, Darwin argued that the various races would necessarily have varying intellectual and moral capacities. So that, for example, the "American aborigines, Negroes, and Europeans differ as much from each other in mind as any three races that can be named." As we have seen, the Europeans came out on top.

Darwin argued further that the different races created by natural selection were necessarily and beneficial-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ly locked in the severest struggle for survival. As he put it in the *Origin*,

> It is the most closely allied forms . . . which, from having nearly the same structure, constitution, and habits, generally come into the severest competition with each other; consequently, each new variety of species, during the progress of its formation, will generally press hardest on its nearest kindred, and tend to exterminate them.

This argument translated directly to his assessment of the evolutionary history of human races, and the necessary and beneficial extinction of the less favored races.

> The civilized races of man will almost certainly exterminate and replace throughout the world the savage races. At the same time the anthropomorphous apes . . . will no doubt be exterminated. The break will then be rendered wider, for it will intervene between man in a more civilized state, as we may hope . . . the Caucasian, and some ape as low as a baboon, instead of as at present between the Negro or Australian and the gorilla.

The European race will inevitably emerge as *the* distinct species "human being," and all the transitional forms—such as the gorilla, the Negro, and so on—will be extinct.

Furthermore, natural selection functions not only between races, but also among individuals within races. Here, oddly enough, Darwin maintained that savage man has an advantage over civilized man. In savage man, the intellectual and moral qualities are not as developed, but such lack actually works to weed out the unfit: "With savages, the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health." Unfortunately, the very development of human compassion which serves to mark the Europeans as more civilized also works against the principle of survival of the fittest.

> We civilized men . . . do our utmost to check the process of elimination; we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of everyone to the last moment. . . . Thus the weak members of civilized societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race; but excepting in the case of man himself, hardly anyone is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed.

What could be done to prevent the European race from devolving under the influence of the weak and the sick? Let the principles of natural selection be applied without obstruction. "Man, like every other animal, has no doubt advanced to his present high condition through a struggle for existence," Darwin reminded the reader, "and if he is to advance still higher he must remain subject to a severe struggle." Turning to the wisdom of animal breeders, Darwin proclaimed that "there should be open competition for all men; and the most able should not be prevented by laws or customs from succeeding best and rearing the largest number of offspring." The worst, of course, should not be allowed to breed at all.

How forcefully ought this program to be carried out? Darwin was vague, but ended with the remark: "All do good service who aid toward this end."

What may we gather from Darwin's evolutionary account of morality? To begin with, Darwin rightly understood that bare sociality allowed for a startling variety of moralities. In contrast to the very determinate list of requisite virtues, definite commands, and established ends in the traditional natural law account, evolution brings forth many different modes of group survival. Just as male lions, when taking over a pride, kill the young that were fathered by the ousted dominant male, so also human societies have flourished quite well with the murder of rivals to regal authority. And just as many female animals will let the runt of the litter die by refusing it nourishment, so also many human societies have survived for hundreds of years by exposing their unwanted and deformed babies. Merely having "social instincts" includes so much that it excludes almost nothing considered morally reprehensible.

Although many today would shudder at Darwin's racism, we must concede that Darwin's conclusions were correctly drawn from his evolutionary principles. If evolution is true, and the races themselves are the result of the struggle to survive, then how could intellectual and moral qualities *not* be diversely acquired by different races?

As for the survival of the fittest, contemporary liberals have attempted to separate Darwin from Social Darwinism, but Darwin's own words advocating severe struggle show us quite clearly that he was the first Social Darwinist. Conservatives (who are often early modern liberals in outlook and temperament) sometimes look fondly at the purifying effects of "severe struggle," substituting economic for natural battle. Such fondness is not rooted in the natural law of Aquinas, but, as Leo Strauss argued, in the modern natural right theory of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

John Locke (as filtered through Adam Smith). But modern natural right theory has led to the world according to Pinker and Dawkins.

Larry Arnhart, in particular, seems to have blurred this fundamental distinction, for he quotes Aquinas ("Conservatives, Darwin & Design: An Exchange," FT, November 2000) as saying that "natural *right* [emphasis added] is that which nature has taught all animals," when Thomas actually said that "those things are said to belong to the natural law [*lex naturalis*] which nature has taught to all animals." In the *Summa Theologiae*, Aquinas does not mean to say that natural law is shared by all animals *including* human beings—the natural law, as the "participation of the eternal law in the rational creature," pertains *only* to human beings (I-II, 91.2)—but that natural law includes natural inclinations shared by other animals, "such as sexual intercourse, education of offspring, and so forth." But for Darwin, we don't just share some aspects of our nature with animals. We are ultimately indistinguishable from other animals, and therefore subject to the very same laws of evolution.

The effort of Arnhart and others to affirm the premises of evolution, and to affirm at the same time a morality grounded in natural law, inevitably fails. Natural law doctrine only makes sense in a universe governed by a benevolent Creator. Nor will it do to affirm both Darwinian evolution and a vague theism, for the engine of such evolution is, on principle, incompatible with any design or direction from above—and that includes moral design and direction. The Darwinism of Pinker and Dawkins, one must conclude, is much more coherent than that of Fukuyama and Arnhart.

Benjamin Wiker *teaches in the Department of Philosophy at the Franciscan University of Steubenville and is a fellow of the Discovery Institute.*

Pilgrim Meets Compassionate

J. Budziszewski

(with apologies to John Bunyan)

I dreamed that when Amoralist saw that he could neither make Pilgrim turn back by the blows of his hammer, nor pierce him with his darts, he left him for a time. And though Pilgrim had been weakened in the battle, he resumed the path, making such time as he could.

He came to a crossroads by a pool of water. By one path was a sign with the words, To the City of the King, but the letters were dim, and the light was fading, and he wondered if his eyes played tricks. Moreover there led out from the crossroads other paths in great number, each in a different direction, some well beaten, but others seemingly little travelled. The sun being low in the sky, and his feet and arms being weary with battle and travel, he said, This is a good place to rest for the night; I will discern my path and take up my journey in the morning. As Pilgrim cupped his hand and lifted water to his lips, he heard a voice saying, Use my dipper instead.

And he looked up and saw a man clothed in pilgrim's habit like himself, who said, I am Compassionate, the steward of the pool. And my pool is called Reflection. Then Pilgrim drank from the dipper as he was bade; but he was not sure whether he were refreshed or not, for the water was cold as death. The face of Compassionate was lined with pity, and he asked, Have you been at war with Apollyon? And Pilgrim replied, Nay, I have not met the one you mention, but indeed I have been at war. Had it not been for my shield, which protected me, I would have perished, for the lies of my foe were as flaming darts and hammerblows to me; and I have passed heaps of bodies that he has crushed. The name of my foe was Amoralist. Compassionate said, That is the one I meant; Amoralist is the name he affects in this age, but of old he was called Apollyon.

And he said, Of your courtesy, let me see your shield. So Pilgrim showed him. And when Compassionate saw the King's Cross on it, he gave it back to Pilgrim, looked sorrowful, and said, I would have you know that although Amoralist is a liar, not everything that he says is a lie. And Pilgrim said, I do not understand. Asked Compassionate, Did he say that the King is dead and that there is no Royal Road? Said Pilgrim, Yes. Asked Compassionate, Did he say that each must hack his own Road through the wilderness, with no authority to hack but that he hacks? Said Pilgrim, Yes. Asked Compassionate, And did he say that to do this, one must be hard and ruthless and commit atrocities, hacking down not only grass and timber, but men and nations and generations that stand in the way? Said Pilgrim, Yes, and that is why we fought; for I was in his way. Then Compassionate said, I would have you know that the last thing Amoralist told you was a lie, but that all the other things were true.

Nay, it is not so, said Pilgrim. Nay, but it is, said Compassionate. The King is dead, for if He lived, then he would not suffer hackers. There is no Royal Road, for if there were, then the hackers too would be on it. Because there is no Royal Road, each must hack his own path through the wilderness. But because the King is dead, each must do so by no authority but that he hacks. Then declared Pilgrim, But at this very crossroads I saw a sign

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inscribed, To the City of the King. Asked Compassionate, Do you see it now? And Pilgrim looked, but it had already grown dark and he could not make it out; so he said, No. You see, said Compassionate, it is as I said.

Pilgrim wept with the loss of his hope. But Compassionate said, be not dismayed. Though Amoralist told the truth about all those things, yet he lied when he told you that one must be hard and ruthless and commit atrocities. For consider: If one may choose any path, then one may choose the path of Compassion. Consider also this: That although there is no Royal Road, yet there are Royal Helps for those who would choose well; and such is this pool, Reflection, and I am its steward. Pilgrim was confused in his mind, and he asked, Then do you choose this path of Compassion? Said Compassionate, Yes. And then he said, Now sleep; perchance morning will bring you new hope.

And I dreamed that Pilgrim lay down to sleep, and as he slept, he dreamed. And he dreamed that in the middle of the night he awoke to find that Compassionate was gone. He prayed, O King, am I to lose not only You and the Royal Road, but Compassion too? And he cried out to the steward of the pool, Where are you? Whereupon the voice of Compassionate returned, I am not far; come here. So Pilgrim rose and stumbled in the direction of the voice, and perceived that he was following a path; though what path it might be, he could not tell, because of the thick darkness. Then he came to a little valley, and at the bottom of the valley was an altar, and on the top of the altar was a fire, and in the light of the fire he saw Compassionate; and from the eyes of Compassionate ran tears; but his face was like the face of Amoralist.

This is the Valley of Pity, said the steward; Watch, and you will learn. And as Pilgrim grew accustomed to the firelight, he saw that around the altar was a crowd of the young leading the aged, and a crowd of the well leading the sick, and a crowd of women leading children. As each of the weak ones reached the altar, Compassionate lifted him into the flames, and he was consumed. Then Pilgrim's bones melted within him, and he cried, These are the atrocities of Apollyon; I passed your work yesterday on the road. But the steward said, No, this is different. For that was the work of hardness, but this is the work of softness; that was the destruction of morality, but this is the creation of morality; that was indifference to suffering, but this is the relief of suffering; that was committing atrocities, but this is making necessary distinctions. For we must sacrifice these in order to give a humane quality of life to those. And Pilgrim swooned, but as he swooned he remembered the oracle which had been told to him by one of the daughters of the Interpreter: When tenderness is detached from the source of tenderness, its logical outcome is terror.

Pilgrim remained long in his swoon, but when the sun was halfway up the sky he awoke. Seeing that he lay in a rocky valley beside a broken altar, he did not know whether he had dreamed or not.

And the name of the valley was Hinnom, and the name of the altar was Topheth; for he read these things upon a stone that had been set there long ago. Then he hurried back along the path to the pool of Reflection, but when he was almost there, he came up short. For standing beside the pool with his back to Pilgrim was Apollyon, and at the feet of Apollyon, with his head cleaved in, was Compassionate. And Apollyon gloated and laughed over the body, saying, You did good work for me, brother, but I can take over now. And after Apollyon had gone away some distance, Pilgrim approached the pool and turned over the body; and underneath it was a pouch or wallet, with some papers and oddments within it. And one of the papers was inscribed, Doctor; and another was inscribed, Professor; and another bore the owner's name. But his name was not Compassionate, as he had affected, but Sentimental; moreover, none of the papers appointed him steward of the pool. So Pilgrim pondered these things in his heart.

And I dreamed that after Pilgrim had covered the body of Sentimental with rocks, he committed his soul to the King, for he thought, Perchance at the last he repented. The sun was at the zenith, and it glittered from the pool, and it illuminated the sign which he had not been able to make out the night before. And its rays fell full upon the words, To the City of the King; and when Pilgrim saw them again he was astonished. So picking up his shield and sword, he continued on his way.

J. BUDZISZEWSKI *is Associate Professor of Government and Philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin.*

Memento Mortimer

Ralph McInerny

Many years ago Mortimer Adler took me to lunch at Antoine's in New Orleans and introduced me to *patates soufflées*. The occasion was the publication of my first novel, and we were attending the annual convention of the American Catholic Philosophical Association, an organization of which Adler was a member and with which he had a long and cordial relationship. Talking philosophy in a posh restaurant was something common for Adler, though many of his neopuritanical critics treated it as sufficient cause to dismiss him as a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

poseur. I only felt like a rustic nephew being treated by a rich and cosmopolitan uncle.

Time dubbed Adler a Peeping Thomist. The editors were fascinated by a man whose philosophical career flourished outside the usual academic setting. It wasn't that Adler eschewed the university. It was the other way round. His sojourns on campus were relatively brief and always stormy. Recent years have seen a proliferation of dictionaries and companions to philosophy featuring brief articles on the problems and personnel of the discipline. Do not waste your time looking for Adler in such volumes. In the annals of official academic philosophy, Adler doesn't exist. But perhaps this is not surprising. Throughout his long life, he was an unmuted rebuke to the educational establishment.

"Reading the *Autobiography* of John Stuart Mill at the age of fifteen while in the editorial office of the old *New York Sun* led me to the discovery of Socrates; and this, in turn, formed my early resolution to try to become a philosopher." Thus begins the first volume of Adler's autobiography. He was born in New York in 1902 of Jewish parents, apparently nonobservant, and educated in city schools, notably De Witt Clinton High School, "one of Manhattan's liberal arts secondary schools." It was at De Witt Clinton that he was bitten by the journalism bug, becoming editor of the *Magpie*, the school's newspaper. In this role, he defied the principal. Disciplined, he dropped out of school and landed a job at the *Sun*. It was with an eye to improving himself as a journalist that he enrolled in the Extension Division of Columbia University, where a course in Victorian literature "was the start of my undoing as a journalist." Presented with Browning, Tennyson, and Rossetti, and learning that Mill could read Greek at age three, Adler came to think himself a late bloomer. From the very outset, there was a sense of urgency in his pursuit of knowledge, as if he had to make up for lost time.

One can see in the ambitions of the teenage Adler the Americanization of education. Knowledge was sought mainly as an instrument to move up the ladder of American society rather than as an end in itself. Yet as Adler entered Columbia College the ideal of liberal education gradually took hold of his mind, pushing out more pragmatic considerations. The disinterested ideal of the liberal arts would come to be his guiding star through the many decades that lay ahead.

As public education was retooled by Deweyites to produce good consumers, American universities lost the sense that they had a definable mission to the young. They became smorgasbords where the raw undergraduate was asked to invent his own notion of education and choose courses accordingly. Adler resisted this trend, insisting on the relationship between disciplines and authors, between aspects of culture and its creators. When he and his friends began to draw up lists of books that would be the *sine quibus non* of an education, they were guided by the goal of philosophizing itself. Once "philosophy" had been an umbrella term covering all disciplines, ordering them to an overall goal, which is wisdom. And what was wisdom if not, ultimately, knowledge of the divine?

One could tell the story of Adler's life in terms of his gradual acceptance of the implications of that defining fact. The point of the life of the mind is to know God: God is the ultimate end of human life. Philosophers go back and forth on the existence of God: Can it be proved? Can it be disproved? Does the idea of God even make sense? Adler's affinity for Aristotle led him inexorably to Thomas Aquinas. The give and take of the Socratic dialogue had fascinated him from the beginning of his philosophical education, and he found it again in the *Summa Theologiae*. Examining rival answers to a question before deciding between them was the essence of philosophy. From the outset, Adler was a formidable dialectician. This is not to be confused with what has come to be called "dialogue," which is really a euphemism for dodging serious argument. By contrast, dialectics seeks the truth and rejects its opposite after having entertained all of the relevant objections.

But even dialectics can be an impediment to truth. The bane of philosophizing is the disconnection between life and the quest for knowledge. When it takes place, this disconnection is especially unfortunate because of the necessary prominence of moral questions and the centrality of God to philosophy. Adler's gradual progress from an early belief in the possibility of fashioning a compelling proof of God's existence to an extra-philosophical relation to God is the real story of his life.

Adler was regularly asked how he could know so much about Catholic theology without accepting it as true. He gave what he called a Thomistic answer. He had not been given the grace of faith. But that, one might say, is a Calvinist rather than Thomist reply. The grace of faith is not offered to a select few and withheld from the rest. It is offered to all, but each must accept it himself. Eventually, Adler became a Christian. Finally, he became the Roman Catholic he had been training to be all his life. That a number of prominent notices of Adler's death failed to mention this central event in his life is a distressing sign of how peripheral religion has become for many in our time.

Serious but not solemn, domineering but, in his way, self-effacing, Adler always conveyed the sheer fun of the intellectual life. There is something arbitrary about deciding on exactly one hundred great books, but why not? He wrote a bestseller called *How to Read a Book* that was shamelessly didactic. Always read with a pencil in

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

your hand. Make notes directly on the page. Buy your own copy, of course.

On Amazon.com, eighty-eight books are listed under his name. He had a gift for titles. *Aristotle for Everybody. Ten Philosophical Mistakes. How to Speak, How to Listen. Six Great Ideas. How to Think about God. The Time of Our Lives. The Difference of Man and the Difference It Makes. The Four Dimensions of Philosophy.* The man who urged everyone to read the great books and authors flooded the market with books of his own. Of course these books were meant to direct you to real books, to great books.

The interrelationships of the great ideas and authors fascinated Adler. Hence the *Syntopticon,* a device to help one maneuver among the great ideas. It was a centerpiece of Adler's lifelong interest in education. In *The Paideia Program: An Educational Syllabus,* he proposed a thorough outline for the education of the young. He also fashioned reading programs for adults that exercised, and still exercise, a great influence on many lives. Nor did Adler overlook the fact that God had given minds to the rich and prosperous as well. He undertook a kind of apostolate to the affluent. The Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies conducted executive seminars in which Adler and CEOs read and discussed Platonic dialogues. University professors teaching the affluent young laughed at this, just as they mocked the generalism that Adler advocated. Perhaps they feared, like Fitzgerald's Nick Carraway, becoming that "narrowest of specialists, the well-rounded man." Superficiality is a danger, but is it any worse than pedantic narrowness?

Adler was democratic—and Aristotelian—in his belief that all men desire to know. Universal education was an Enlightenment dream, as was the hope that knowledge would lead automatically to virtue. Well, it doesn't, and knowledge without virtue can be a menace. But, likewise, virtue without knowledge is insufficient for a good human life. What Mortimer Adler sought to do was to diffuse as widely as possible the great achievements of the human mind. He failed to have much influence on public education, just as he and Robert Hutchins failed to change the University of Chicago. But over the course of a long life, Adler preached and exemplified the merits of a liberal education. And in doing so, he touched the lives of millions.

A few years ago a symposium on Adler's work was held in Aspen. Many papers were given, and Adler listened to them all. He was already very old, indeed he had to be helped into the seminar room by two of his sons. It was an occasion when he might have felt posthumous. But he never could be simply a third person; he had to be an interlocutor. The high point of the meeting was Adler's detailed response to all the papers. Speaking extemporaneously as always, it was clear that he hadn't missed a word and that the old feistiness was still there. But the truly memorable moment came when he spoke of the transition in his own life from being intellectually convinced of the existence of God to loving the God that he knew. The philosopher's God became incarnate in Christ, and finally Adler saw that his long quest for wisdom could best be seen as a kind of *Imitatio Christi. Requiescat in pace.*

RALPH MCINERNY *is Michael P. Grace Professor of Medieval Studies and Director of the Jacques Maritain Center at the University of Notre Dame. His Gifford Lectures,* Characters in Search of Their Author, *were published by the University of Notre Dame Press last year.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"Salvation Is from the Jews"

Richard John Neuhaus

The Samaritan woman said, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain; and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship." Jesus responded, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews." (John 4:19-22)

Despite its suggestive power, the striking statement of Jesus that salvation is from the Jews is seldom encountered in the now voluminous literature on the Jewish-Christian dialogue. The reason may be that the exchange is entangled in another dispute about supersessionism between religious communities, a dispute entirely apart from the Jewish-Christian relationship. It will be remembered that the Samaritans—the *shamerim*, which means "observant"—claimed to be the true Israel who remained loyal to Yahweh when Eli allegedly seduced his brethren into constructing the apostate shrine at Shiloh instead of at God's chosen mountain, Gerizim, as recounted in 1 Samuel 1. After the fourth-century schism, Jews forbade Samaritans to make offerings in Jerusalem, to buy unmovable property, and to marry or circumcise a Jew. As John the Evangelist writes, "For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans." In short, Jerusalem Judaism had definitively superseded the cult of Gerizim. Thus the exchange with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well may be something of an embarrassment in a Jewish-Christian dialogue that is centrally concerned with the question of supersessionism.

RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS *is Editor-in-Chief of* FIRST THINGS. *This essay is adapted from a paper delivered at a Jewish-Christian conference sponsored by the Center for Catholic and Evangelical Theology.*

Or it may be that in the Jewish-Christian dialogue there is little reference to the statement that salvation is from the Jews because the dialogue is not centrally concerned with the question of salvation. In any event, our passage has not been treated kindly by Christian commentators. A recent ecumenical Christian commentary on the passage says that Jesus is acknowledging that "God's salvation to humanity came historically through the Jews as a point of departure, not as origin or source. Salvation comes only from God." "A point of departure"—it has a dismissive ring to it, almost as though Jews and Judaism are, for Christians, a dispensable accident of history.

Rudolf Bultmann, in a footnote in his commentary on John, gives our passage even shorter shrift. It is, he says, "completely or partially an editorial gloss," since the statement that salvation is from the Jews is "impossible in John [who] does not regard the Jews as God's chosen and saved people." "It is hard to see," he writes, "how the Johannine Jesus, who constantly disassociates himself from the Jews, could have made such a statement." An interesting question that Bultmann does not address is why a later editor, presumably at a time when the lines between Jews and Christians had hardened, would have inserted such a statement. It seems improbable that an editor was trying to rectify what Bultmann views as the anti-Jewish bias of Jesus. It is more likely, I think, that Jesus said what he is said to have said, and that Bultmann's view reflects his difficulty, and the difficulty of too many other Christians, in coming to terms with the Jewishness of Jesus, and of Christianity.

There is another reason for the neglect of this saying of Jesus. In some circles today, it is the accepted wisdom that the Fourth Gospel is impossibly anti-Judaic and even, it is anachronistically said, anti-Semitic. John therefore should have no place in our

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reflections, and certainly not in Jewish-Christian dialogue. Thus do we with our putatively superior wisdom nullify the normativity of the sacred text. Nothing so powerfully testifies to the Jewishness of John's Gospel as its vigorous, and sometimes disconcertingly aggressive, contention against opposing Messianic expectations held by other Jews.

In his 1955 commentary on John, the estimable C. K. Barrett offers what may be taken as a more conventional supersessionist understanding of these words of Jesus: "The saying does not mean that Jews as such are inevitably saved, but rather that the election of Israel to a true knowledge of God was in order that, at the time appointed by God, salvation might proceed from Israel to the world, and Israel's own unique privilege be thereby dissolved. . . . This eschatological salvation is in the person of Jesus in process of realization and the Jews are losing their position to the Church."

St. Augustine, as we might expect, treats the passage more imaginatively. Samaritans were "aliens" to the Jews, he notes, and so it is that the woman at the well is a type of the Church, which "was to come of the Gentiles, an alien from the race of the Jews." Thus the Jewish supersession of the Samaritans is reversed by the Samaritan identification with the Church that supersedes the Jews. Of our passage Augustine says, "A great thing has he attributed to the Jews," but then he immediately adds, "but do not understand him to mean those spurious Jews [who rejected the Christ]." Citing Ephesians 2, he says that Samaritans and Gentiles were strangers and foreigners to the covenants of God. When Jesus says, "We worship what we know," he is speaking "in the person of the Jews, but not of all Jews, not of reprobate Jews, but of such as were the apostles, as were the prophets." Citing Romans 11, he notes that "God has not rejected His people whom He foreknew," but by "His people" Augustine means only those Jews who are reconciled with the former aliens in Christ and his Church.

"Salvation is from the Jews." Few thinkers have pondered that idea, if not that specific passage, more deeply than Franz Rosenzweig (1886-1929), who was, as it were, reconverted to Judaism after a very close brush with becoming a Christian. Rosenzweig's view is frequently, if too simply, summarized in the proposition that Christianity is Judaism for the Gentiles. Moreover, Rosenzweig was centrally concerned with salvation, as is evident in the title of his major work, *The Star of Redemption*. This touches on a perduring, and perhaps necessary, ambivalence in Jewish attitudes toward Christians and Christianity. In the historic statement of November 2000, *Dabru Emet* ("Speak the Truth"), signed by almost two hundred notable Jewish scholars, it is said that "through Christianity hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel." Then, toward the end of *Dabru Emet*, it is said: "We respect Christianity as a faith that originated within Judaism and that still has significant contacts with it. We do not see it as an extension of Judaism. Only if we cherish our own traditions can we pursue this relationship with integrity."

Yet it would seem that, if through Christianity hundreds of millions of people have entered into relationship with the God of Israel, Christianity must be, in some important sense, an extension of Judaism. Moreover, *Dabru Emet* makes clear that this relationship is one of worshiping "the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob," underscoring that the God of Israel is not separable from the people of Israel. It follows that to be in relationship with the God of Israel is to be in relationship with the people of Israel. As is well known, in the documents of the Second Vatican Council, a favored phrase for the Church is the People of God. There is no plural for the people of God. Certainly there are distinct traditions that must be cherished and respected, but one may suggest that they are traditions within the one tradition, the one story, of salvation. That story is nothing less than, in Robert Jenson's happy phrase, "the story of the world."

Our distinct traditions reflect differences within the one tradition of witness to the God of Israel and his one plan of salvation. It is misleading, I believe, to speak of two peoples of God, or of two covenants, never mind to speak of two religions. While it was not specifically addressed to Jewish-Christian relations, this was the truth underscored also by the statement in 2000 by the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Dominus Iesus*. It is not Christian imperialism but fidelity to revealed truth that requires Christians to say that Christ is Lord of all or he is not Lord at all. From the Jewish side, when after the Council the Catholic Church was formalizing its conversations with non-Christians, the Jewish interlocutors insisted that they not be grouped with the Vatican dicastery designed to deal with other religions but be included in conjunction with the secretariat for promoting Christian unity. There were political reasons for that insistence, not least having to do with the politics of the Middle East, but that arrangement has, I believe, much more profound implications than were perhaps realized at the time.

The salvation that is from the Jews cannot be proclaimed or lived apart from the Jews. This is not to say that innumerable Christians, indeed the vast majority of Christians, have not and do not live their Christian faith without consciousness of or contact with Jews. Obviously, they have and they do. The percentage of Christians involved in any form of Jewish-Christian dialogue is minuscule. Not much larger, it may be noted, is

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the percentage of Jews involved. In addition, significant dialogue is, for the most part, a North American phenomenon. It is one of the many things to which the familiar phrase applies, "Only in America." In Europe, for tragically obvious reasons, there are not enough Jews; in Israel, for reasons of growing tragedy, there are not enough Christians. Only in America are there enough Jews and Christians in a relationship of mutual security to make possible a dialogue that is unprecedented in two thousand years of history. The significance of this dialogue is in no way limited to America. The significance is universal. There is one people of Israel, as there is one Church. Providential purpose in history is a troubled subject, and the idea of America's providential purpose is even more troubled, but I suggest that we would not be wrong to believe that this dialogue, so closely linked to the American experience, is an essential part of the unfolding of the story of the world. Isaiah 43:19: "Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?"

I think it fair to say that neither Christians nor Jews would have seen this new thing or have acted upon it were it not for the unspeakable tragedy of the Holocaust. This is recognized in *Dabru Emet*, which says of the Christian understanding of Judaism, "In the decades since the Holocaust, Christianity has changed dramatically." It should also be recognized that Judaism has, at least in large part, changed dramatically, as is evident in, for example, a statement such as *Dabru Emet*. Following World War II and accelerated by strident attacks on Christianity, and on Catholicism in particular, by such as Rolf Hochhuth and his 1963 play *The Deputy*, Jewish-Christian "dialogue" was for some years conducted mainly in the accusative mode. In this mode, the chief duty of Christians was to engage in rites of self-denigration for wrongs committed against Jews and Judaism. Some Jewish organizations and a good many self-depreciating Christians are still trapped in that mode. And it cannot be denied that, without the Jewish prosecution and subsequent Christian defensiveness, the self-examination resulting in the changes alluded to by *Dabru Emet* might not have happened. It is true that God writes straight with crooked lines.

Those Jews for whom "Never Again" means never enough of Christian self-denigration will continue to be with us, and we must try to contain our impatience, recognizing the burden of historical grievances and suspicions, and the institutional interest of some organizations in exploiting such grievances and suspicions. But in recent years the dialogue is becoming more truly a dialogue, as both Christians and Jews are at last catching up with, for instance, the proposal of David Novak in his important 1989 book, *Jewish-Christian Dialogue*. Indeed it may be said that, through the convoluted ways of history, we are at last catching up with the 1920s dialogue between Rosenzweig and Eugen Rosenstock, which was emphatically a dialogue about salvation—the salvation that comes from the Jews.

Still today there are Jews who resist a dialogue about salvation because that is necessarily a theological dialogue, and they do not want Christians to make Judaism a part of the Christian story. Similarly, there may be Christians who resent efforts such as *Dabru Emet* that tend to make Christianity part of the Jewish story. Advancing the dialogue requires, I believe, our recognition that the Christian story and the Jewish story are of theological interest only as they participate in the story of the one God of Israel. Along the way there are many stories, but ultimately the story of salvation, like the phrase "the people of God," has no plural.

Today it is commonly said that Christianity needs to reappropriate its Jewish dimensions, including the Jewishness of Jesus, and that is undoubtedly part of the truth. But this should not be understood as a matter of taking some parts from the Jewish house next door in order to rehabilitate our Christian house. We live in the same house, of which Christians say with St. Paul that the Jewish Christ is the cornerstone (Ephesians 2:20). To change the metaphor somewhat, we live in the house of the one people of God only as we live with the Jews of whom Jesus was—and eternally is—one. The second Person of the Holy Trinity, true God and true man, is Jewish flesh. As is the eucharistic body we receive, as is the Body of Christ into which we are incorporated by Baptism. It is said that when John XXIII, then papal nuncio in Paris, first saw the pictures of the Jewish corpses at Auschwitz, he exclaimed, "There is the Body of Christ!"

All such insights are but variations on the words of Paul that must, for Christians, be ever at the center of our reflection on the mystery of living Judaism: "But if some of the branches were broken off and you, a wild olive shoot, were grafted in their place to share the richness of the olive tree, do not boast over the branches. If you do boast, remember it is not you that support the root, but the root that supports you. . . . So do not be proud, but stand in awe" (Romans 12:17ff). "Salvation is from the Jews." This people is not, as the aforementioned Bible commentator suggests, a "point of departure" but remains until the end of time our point of arrival. By the appointment of the God whom we worship, we travel together, joined in awe of one another, sometimes in fear of one another, always in argument with one another, until that final point of arrival when we shall know even as we are known (1 Corinthians 13:12).

When we Christians do not walk together with Jews, we are in danger of regressing to the paganism from which we emerged. Rosenzweig saw that gnosticism,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pantheism, and assimilation to the idolatry of culture and nation are constant temptations for Christians. In 1929 he was prescient in foreseeing what would happen in Germany:

> The nations have been in a state of inner conflict ever since Christianity with its supernational power came upon them. Ever since then, and everywhere, a Siegfried is at strife with that stranger, the man of the cross (*des gekreuzigten Mannes*), in his very appearance so suspect a character. . . . This stranger who resists the continued attempts to assimilate him to that nation's own self-idealization.

Marcionism was not a one-time heresy. New Marcions are ever at hand to seduce Christianity into becoming a culture-religion, a practical morality, or but another spirituality of self-fulfillment. Christianity does indeed seek to engage culture, provide a guide for living, and propose the way to human flourishing, but, reduced to any of these undoubtedly good ends, it is not Christianity. Liberal Protestant theology beginning in the nineteenth century was much preoccupied with the question of "the essence of Christianity," and, not incidentally, was contemptuous of Jews and Judaism. Christianity is not defined by an essence but by the man of the cross, a permanently suspect character, forever a stranger of that strange people, the Jews. Through Jesus the Jew, we Christians are anchored in history, defined not by an abstract essence but by a most particular story.

With respect to Judaism, Christians today are exhorted to reject every form of supersessionism, and so we should. To supersede means to nullify, to void, to make obsolete, to displace. The end of supersessionism, however, cannot and must not mean the end of the argument between Christians and Jews. We cannot settle into the comfortable interreligious politesse of mutual respect for positions deemed to be equally true. Christ and his Church do not supersede Judaism but they do continue and fulfill the story of which we are both part. Or so Christians must contend. It is the story that begins with Abraham who in the eucharistic canon we call "our father in faith."

There is no avoiding the much vexed question of whether this means that Jews should enter into the further fulfillment of the salvation story by becoming Christians. Christians cannot, out of a desire to be polite, answer that question in the negative. We can and must say that the ultimate duty of each person is to form his conscience in truth and act upon that discernment; we can and must say that there are great goods to be sought in dialogue apart from conversion; we can and must say that we reject proselytizing, which is best defined as evangelizing in a way that demeans the other; we can and must say that Jews and Christians need one another in many public tasks imposed upon us by a culture that is, in large part, in manifest rebellion against the God of Israel; we can and must say that there are theological, philosophical, and moral questions to be explored together, despite our differences regarding Messianic promise; we can and must say that friendship between Jew and Christian can be secured in shared love for the God of Israel; we can and must say that the historical forms we call Judaism and Christianity will be transcended, but not superseded, by the fulfillment of eschatological promise. But along the way to that final fulfillment we are locked in argument. It is an argument by which—for both Jew and Christian—conscience is formed, witness is honed, and friendship is deepened. This is our destiny, and this is our duty, as members of the one people of God—a people of God for which there is no plural.

We can do no better than Paul, who, at the end of his anguished ponderings in Romans nine through eleven, having arrived at the farthest reaches of analysis and explanation, dissolves into doxology:

> O the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! . . . For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen.

Along the way to the eschatological resolution of our disagreements, Jews and Christians encourage one another to wait faithfully upon the Lord. Not all Jews and not all Christians agree with this way of understanding the matter. For instance, Christopher Leighton writes, "Plurality and difference are the inescapable realities of our existence, and any theological attempt to dissolve our diversity through appeals to a higher truth or a totalizing unity are suspect, even when projected against an eschatological horizon." He goes on to say that "the challenge for Christian theology is to accept, perhaps even celebrate, the gaps, the silences, the distances between us Christians and Jews." That is in some respects an attractive view and should not be dismissed as being no more than interreligious politesse. But it is, I believe, finally inadequate. "Totalizing" is, of course, a pejorative term, but it is precisely a definitive and comprehensive eschatological resolution that we await. Leighton is surely right to say, however, that along the way we should engage the Jewish people "as a mystery in whose company we may discover our own limits and in whose midst we may also discern new and unsuspected insights into ourselves, the world, and God."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It is precisely that spirit of discovery and discernment that marks the Second Vatican Council's "Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions" (*Nostra Aetate*). Note that the declaration is about the Church, not simply about individual or group relations. Here the mystery of the Church encounters the mystery of the Jewish people. "As this sacred Synod searches into the mystery of the Church, it recalls the spiritual bond linking the people of the New Covenant with Abraham's stock." The Church does not go outside herself but more deeply within herself to engage Jews and Judaism. This is consonant with Rosenzweig's observation that Christianity becomes something else when it is not centered in the Jewish "man of the cross." *Nostra Aetate* continues: "Nor can [the Church] forget that she draws sustenance from the root of that good olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild olive branches of the Gentiles. Indeed, the Church believes that by his cross Christ, our Peace, reconciled Jew and Gentile, making them both one in himself (cf. Ephesians 2:14-16)." Note that the statement that the Church draws sustenance from the Jewish people is in the present tense. It is not simply that she drew sustenance in her beginnings; she now, and perhaps until the end of time, draws sustenance. Also with Muslims and others, *Nostra Aetate* enjoins understanding, respect, study, and dialogue, but only with reference to the Jews does the declaration say that we are dealing with the very mystery of the Church, and therefore the story of salvation.

At least for Catholics, *Nostra Aetate* marks the beginning of the present Jewish-Christian dialogue. That dialogue has produced many additional documents, official and unofficial, over the years. One may ask whether and, if so, how there have been advances over *Nostra Aetate* in Catholic understanding. That question necessarily engages the thought of John Paul II, who, it is universally acknowledged, has made unprecedented contributions to Catholic-Jewish relations. The extended reflection on Jews and Judaism in the Pope's remarkable little book *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* observes that "the New Covenant has its roots in the Old. The time when the people of the Old Covenant will be able to see themselves as part of the New is, naturally, a question to be left to the Holy Spirit." A purpose of the dialogue, if not *the* purpose of the dialogue, he adds, is "not to put obstacles in the way" of Jews coming to that recognition.

Note that he speaks of when, not whether, this will happen. As though to leave no doubt on this point, he goes on to discuss "how the New Covenant serves to fulfill all that is rooted in the vocation of Abraham, in God's covenant with Israel at Sinai, and in the whole rich heritage of the inspired Prophets who, hundreds of years before that fulfillment, pointed in the Sacred Scriptures to the One whom God would send in the 'fullness of time' (cf. Galatians 4:4)." Meanwhile, John Paul notes, the Church is carrying out the mission of Israel to the nations. He quotes approvingly a Jewish leader who said at a meeting, "I want to thank the Pope for all that the Catholic Church has done over the last two thousand years to make the true God known." We may recall in this connection that the Council's great Constitution on the Church, authoritatively setting forth her ecclesiological self-understanding, is titled *Lumen Gentium*, referring to the fulfillment of the vocation of Israel to be a light to the nations.

A useful reference for understanding the state of authoritative Catholic teaching is, of course, the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The Catechism has relatively little to say about Jews and Judaism in the post-biblical period, although, it must be admitted, the subject receives more attention than it probably does in the everyday piety, preaching, and catechesis of the Church. We read that "the people descended from Abraham would be the trustees of the promise made to the patriarchs, the chosen people, called to prepare for that day when God would gather all His children into the unity of the Church" (#60). That hint of supersessionism is immediately tempered by reference to the branches being grafted onto the root of Israel. At another point the Jewish character of the early Church is underscored, citing the statement of James in Acts, "How many thousands there are among the Jews of those who have believed; and they are all zealous for the Law" (#595). The discussion of the Second Coming refers to Romans 11 and "the 'full inclusion' of the Jews in the Messiah's salvation" (#674). The Catechism's fullest statement is found under the title "The Church and non-Christians," and deserves quotation in full:

> And when one considers the future, God's People of the Old Covenant and the new People of God tend towards similar goals: expectation of the coming (or the return) of the Messiah. But one awaits the return of the Messiah who died and rose from the dead and is recognized as Lord and Son of God; the other awaits the coming of a Messiah, whose features remain hidden till the end of time; and the latter waiting is accompanied by the drama of not knowing or of misunderstanding Christ Jesus. (#840)

While the Catechism is of course an authoritative presentation of magisterial teaching, one misses *Nostra Aetate*'s sense of the present-tense relationship to the Jewish people from which the Church learns and draws sustenance. Nor, in this connection, does the Catechism's treatment of eschatological expectation suggest a promised understanding or resolution of differ-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ences beyond that which the Church already knows and embodies.

One may usefully contrast David Novak's concluding thoughts on "the final redemption" in his book *Jewish-Christian Dialogue*:

> Until that time, we are all travelers passing through a vale of tears until we appear before God in Zion. Jews and Christians begin at the same starting point, and both are convinced that we will meet at the all-mysterious end. Yet we cannot deny that our appointed tasks in this world are very different and must remain so because the covenant is not the same for both of us. It is God alone who will bring us to our unknown destination in a time pleasing to Him. . . . Our dialogue might be able to show the world that the hope it needs for its very survival can only be the hope for its final redemption. . . . From creation and revelation comes our faith that God has not and will not abandon us or the world, that the promised redemption is surely yet to come.

Christians believe that the redemption that is surely yet to come has appeared in the Redeemer, Jesus the Christ—although, to be sure, the appearance of the Kingdom, and therefore of the Messianic King in the fullness of glory, is not yet complete. Christians speak of the first advent and the second advent of the Christ, but there is another sense in which we may speak of his advent in the singular. And, if we think of his advent in the singular, we are still awaiting the final act. In the End Time, however, the Messiah will not appear as a stranger. Along the way, we have known his name and named his name. Yet Novak's sense of heightened expectation of something new—as distinct from the confirmation of a completely foregone and foreknown conclusion—seems to me the appropriate mode of eschatological hope also for Christians. Knowing that we do not yet know even as we are known, we know that there is more to be known. Dialogue between Jews and Christians should be marked by an element of curiosity, by shared exploration of what we do not know, and perhaps cannot know until the End Time.

For this reason, too, I believe our passage from John 4—"Salvation is from the Jews"—should have a more prominent place in the dialogue than has been the case. The passage nicely combines the "now" and "not yet" of life lived eschatologically. The "now" is unequivocal. The woman said to him, "I know that Messiah is coming and when he comes he will show us all things." Jesus answers, "I who speak to you am he." The "now" and "not yet" are then exquisitely joined in the words of Jesus: "The hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. . . . The hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him."

Here one can agree with Bultmann in recognizing in these words an intimation of the vision of Revelation 21:22-26: "And I saw no temple in the city, for its temple is the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb. And the city has no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb. By its light shall the nations walk; and the kings of the earth shall bring their glory into it, and its gates shall never shut by day—and there shall be no night; they shall bring into it the glory and the honor of the nations." That is the mission of Israel fulfilled as *lumen gentium.*

Along the way to that fulfillment, Christians and Jews will disagree about whether we can name the name of the Lamb. And when it turns out that we Christians have rightly named the Lamb ahead of time, there will be, as St. Paul reminds us, no reason for boasting; for in the beginning, all along the way, and in the final consummation, it will be evident to all that the Lamb—which is to say salvation—is from the Jews. There will be no boasting for many reasons, not least because boasting is unseemly and there will be nothing unseemly in the Kingdom of God. But chiefly there will be no boasting because then all glory will be to the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Jesus for His inclusion of us, all undeserving, in the story of salvation. Salvation is from the Jews, then, not as a "point of departure" but as the continuing presence and promise of a point of arrival—a point of arrival that we, Christians and Jews, together pray that we will together reach. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Stanley Fish's Milton

Edward T. Oakes

How Milton Works. By Stanley Fish. *Harvard University Press. 616 pp. $35.*

Stanley Fish zooms across the firmament of American higher education like Flash Gordon's rocketship. Currently the Academic Dean at the University of Illinois in Chicago (where he cops an annual salary approaching a quarter of a million dollars, making him the highest paid dean in the country), he began his career as a scholar of seventeenth-century English literature at the University of California, Berkeley. He then went on to teach at Johns Hopkins before becoming chairman of the English Department at Duke University, where he pretty much single-handedly transformed a staid and tweedy department of old-fashioned litterateurs into a teeming, buzzing hotbed of trendy, avant-garde professors touting the very latest in Marxist, Queer, feminist, and deconstructionist criticism.

The rocket fuel, so to speak, that launched this Piscine spaceship into orbit was his second book, *Surprised by Sin* (1967), an astonishing work of Milton interpretation, especially coming from so young a scholar. Prior to this book, most Miltonists had divided themselves into two camps: those who believed that Milton was sincere in his Roundhead and Puritan convictions and wrote only to edify his readers, and those who believed that, at least in *Paradise Lost*, he was (in William Blake's famous phrase) "of the Devil's party without knowing it." According to this latter view—which in the wake of Romanticism became the received wisdom—Milton's portrait of Satan was too seductive, too fascinating, in a word too *Romantic*, and his portrait of God too monochromatic and totalitarian, too frightening and repellent, for the reader to take at face value Milton's surface Christian convictions.

Couched in such terms, the debate obviously could go nowhere. Not only are these two theses antithetical, they also depend on evidence that the other side must by the nature of its position rule out of court. Thus the Milton-Is-Sincere school accepts the surface of the text and then uses that surface meaning to prove its case; while the Milton-as-Closet-Satanist position by definition has to deny the validity of the surface meaning as probative. Stanley Fish's great accomplishment in *Surprised by Sin* was to find value in both points of view while moving the debate away from a sterile either/or alternative by showing how both sides could be right but in ways neither side could suspect from within its own narrow framework. According to his thesis, the reader is *supposed* to feel drawn to Satan, for from Adam and Eve we have all inherited an inclination to find Satan's sin attractive. Not to feel drawn to the figure of Lucifer means that one is not feeling the tug of original sin, an impossibility in Milton's theology. But by reading the epic while feeling the undertow of Satan's mesmerizing defiance of God, the reader also ends up *reenacting* the Fall, including the chastening experience of finding out, after the fact, how dreary and disappointing evil can be.

So productive of insights did *Surprised by Sin* prove to be that it generated a whole new mode of literary criticism in its wake, the so-called reader-response school. Until Fish's book remarkably few literary critics concentrated any attention on the reader, only on the text as a self-contained, supposedly self-explanatory object. Indeed to regard the text as anything other than a "well-wrought urn" was often anathematized as the "affective fallacy," almost as if it were a heresy to notice that readers react emotionally to what they read. One important manual for budding literary critics, for

Edward T. Oakes, S.J., *teaches in the Religious Studies Department of Regis University in Denver, Colorado, and has just translated Josef Pieper's* The Concept of Sin *(St. Augustine's Press).*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

example, W. K. Wimsatt's *The Verbal Icon*, almost sounds like a theological tract for seminarians (as even its title implies); and so it issues its dire warnings in predictably magisterial tones:

> The Affective Fallacy is a confusion between the poem and its *results* (what it is and what it does). . . . It begins by trying to derive the standards of criticism from the psychological effects of the poem and ends in impressionism and relativism. The outcome is that the poem itself . . . tends to disappear.

It probably goes without saying that the indictment of "impressionism and relativism" is precisely the charge leveled against reader-response criticism by more conservative English professors. Nor did it help matters that, after the publication of *Surprised by Sin*, things seemed only to get worse. For in its wake, other similarly subjective—not to say anarchic—schools of literary criticism soon flourished, such as deconstruction, poststructuralism, Queer Theory, all of this culminating in the attacks on the canon that became the great student cause of the early 1990s (with Milton as its chief victim). But if Milton was sincere in his Christian beliefs (and surely he was), and if he really felt called to give witness to his Puritan beliefs (as surely he did), then he must have wanted to provoke in his readers a response so powerful that it would transform their lives; and Fish cannot have been amiss to point that out.

Nor can it be denied that different readers understand different things by the same words, that they bring different experiences to a text and will thus inevitably hear the text say different things. English idiom speaks of different "readings" of a text, meaning different interpretations; and surely that idiom cannot be accidental. We *interpret* differently because we *read* differently. As the renowned critic Northrop Frye once put it: "It has been said of Boehme [the early Lutheran pantheist and mystic] that his books are like a picnic to which the author brings the words and the reader the meaning. The remark may been intended as a sneer at Boehme, but it is an exact description of all works of literary art without exception."

Such a concession, however, still leaves us with a question: Are then all interpretations created equal, or can the text still adjudicate between competing readings? Probably most literary critics, at least those who ply their trade in our nation's elite universities, would opt for the former view. One need only consider the response of the critical community to E. D. Hirsch's *Validity in Interpretation* (1967), a much (and often unjustly) attacked book that dared to defend objectivity in interpretation in the climate of 1960s radicalism. As Hirsch rightly pointed out, skepticism about hermeneutics undercuts the claim of *any* humanistic discipline to provide genuine knowledge, however provisional. Moreover, for Hirsch the ever-receding goal of a consensus interpretation must not be ruled out simply because words are often ambiguous and conclusions therefore uncertain. "Certainty is not the same thing as validity," he says, "and knowledge of ambiguity is not necessarily ambiguous knowledge."

It might come as a surprise to readers who know the work of Stanley Fish only by his reputation among conservative literary critics, but every sentence in his new book *How Milton Works* validates—indeed depends on—Hirsch's principles of interpretation. First of all, whereas deconstructionists like to proclaim "the death of the author," both Hirsch and Fish place the court of last appeal in the author's intention, and not in the reader's response (hence the title of this volume, which tells us that Fish's interest lies in how *Milton*, and not the reader, works). Unlike Paul Ricoeur or Hans-Georg Gadamer, who hold that a text takes on a life of its own as soon as it leaves the author's pen (so that it is perfectly possible, in fact something to be expected, that later readers will understand a text better than the author himself), both Hirsch and Fish hold that the author's intention always trumps. For example, if interpretation rages in the scholarly community over an ambiguous text and someone accidentally comes across a postcard from the author to his spinster aunt describing his own view of the matter, then that postcard must, for Hirsch, win out over competing interpretations. Similarly for Fish, if Milton considers *Paradise Regained* his most important work, far transcending *Paradise Lost* in artistic power and theological cogency (and such Milton did believe), then the critic must oblige the author and interpret the latter in terms of the former, no matter what the opinion of critics from Samuel Johnson on down might say to the contrary.

Absolutely crucial to Fish's interpretation of Milton's work is a document discovered among Milton's papers in the nineteenth century called *De Doctrina Christiana*, basically a tract arguing on behalf of a number of heresies, especially these three openly avowed heterodoxies: that the Son was not coeternal with the Father, that the soul dies and is only later resurrected with the body, and that God created the world not out of nothing but out of the divine substance (interestingly enough, Isaac Newton's Christology was similarly Arian).

Needless to say, given Milton's semi-canonical status as an interpreter of the Fall, such explicitly professed heterodoxy makes many critics uncomfortable, and so they insist that this document cannot have come from his pen. Fish disagrees, rightly in my view. But my point here is that he argues on exactly the same principles as would a biblical scholar who sets out to prove that two

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

anonymous works come from the same author. Imagine if you will that the New Testament book we know today as the Acts of the Apostles had never made it into the canon and had disappeared from history until a copy of it was discovered in Egypt in the last century. Many, perhaps most, New Testament scholars would immediately and forthrightly argue for its coming from the same pen as did Luke's Gospel, as indeed they do today. And so Fish argues for the Miltonic authorship of *Christian Doctrine*, and on the basis of the same principles used by historical critics.

Moreover, throughout this book Fish takes issue with various literary critics over their interpretations of Milton: he quotes them, he summarizes their views, he surveys the literature—and then he disagrees by appealing *to the text*.

So, then, with whom does he take issue? That's easy to answer: liberals. If *Surprised by Sin* refuted the Romantic misreading of *Paradise Lost* as a closet apologia for Satan, *How Milton Works* can be seen as a refutation of the liberal view of Milton as the bitter enemy of royal censorship and ringing advocate of free speech and nondogmatic Christianity:

> Some years ago, a very literate professor of law with more than a casual interest in the First Amendment confessed himself surprised when I reminded him that in the *Areopagitica* Milton excludes Catholics and some others from his plea for general toleration. He hadn't remembered it that way and had always thought of Milton as an exemplary spokesman for free speech and free expression. . . . This [liberal misunderstanding] is especially true in the modern day, when the *Areopagitica* has become a basic text supporting the ethics of disinterested inquiry, and Milton the revolutionary has become a man with the ability [in the words of one liberal critic] "to look at social issues without using the glasses of sectarian theology, which is very rare in this passionate time."

If that view were not bizarre enough, Fish quotes another liberal who holds that Milton is not only the apostle of unrestrained freedom but is also "above all, a Humanist—the greatest representative in England of that movement which had abandoned the dogmatism of the Middle Ages and was seeking for a natural or empirical basis for its beliefs."

Now anyone who has rightly read but two pages of Milton's prose knows that these views are not just wrong but utterly antithetical to everything he stood for. In fact, the *Areopagitica* specifically advocates that the government keep "a vigilant eye how books demean themselves," and it goes on to urge the authorities "thereafter to confine, imprison, and do sharpest justice on [their authors] as malefactors." In other words, reader-response criticism might be all very well, but if Milton's readers are liberal, one can be sure that for Fish they will likely be misreading Milton.

Of course, not all liberal critics are as blind to the plain meaning of Milton's texts as those quoted above. Some liberals, however blinkered their own views, cannot help but recognize Milton's Puritanism or his debt to medieval angelology. Yet because they remain attached to his antiroyalist politics and appreciate his polemic against prior restraint and government licensing of the printing presses, they posit a nonexistent conflict between the poet's republican politics and his "repressive" theology. A critic by the name of Herman Rapaport, for example, holds that Milton was "committed to the republicanism of Rome and to ideals of freedom and liberty . . . but [his] mind also harbored a darker fascination with a dictatorial takeover, with what amounts to another absolutism much bleaker and more calculating than the foppery of Charles I." Freedom of the press, yes; Cromwell and Puritanism, no.

But this dichotomy, too, is wrong, utterly wrong. As Fish rightly sees, "There are not two landscapes but only one in Milton's poetry, and not two values but only one in his thought." C. S. Lewis would agree; as he put it in his *Preface to Paradise Lost*, trying to disentangle Milton's poetry from his theology is like asking us to study *Hamlet* after the revenge code has been removed. The Romantic misunderstanding of Milton begins and ends here, by dispensing with or ignoring Milton's God. Indeed, for Fish, the Romantic interpretation *depends on* removing God from Milton's thought:

> It is only if the first principle of Milton's thought—that God is God and not one of a number of contending forces—is denied or forgotten that his poetry can be seen as conflicted or tragic or inconclusive or polysemous or paradoxical, words that name literary qualities most of us have been taught to admire. They are not, I will argue, qualities Milton admires; and while their absence in his work might properly be a reason for declining to read it, it should not be a reason for rewriting it in the name of values he everywhere rejects when they are offered as alternatives to the single but complex life—faith, obedience, chastity of mind and deed—he everywhere celebrates.

But what makes Fish's book unique in this regard is not just the way he clearly wants to distance himself from the main implications of his own reader-response criticism: that the reader decides the meaning of a text,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

even to the point that the text quite disappears (the title of one of Fish's later books in fact plaintively asked, *Is There a Text in This Class?*). Not only *is* there a text in his class (and a canonical one to boot), but, even more startlingly, any advocacy of ungoverned, free-for-all interpretation using the excuse of reader-response criticism now comes *with Satanic pedigree*:

> It is the gap between representation and the reality represented that provides space [for] equivocation, doubleness, and insincerity. . . . Words [after Satan's Fall] display the false freedom of irresponsibility—the freedom that comes with not being tethered to anything but the emptiness within, a freedom that is initially exhilarating because within its license you can go on forever just making it up, pretending, counterfeiting. But that is all you can do; and the more frantically you do it, the more fictions you proliferate, the greater the distance between you and what is real and true.

If St. Augustine were to come back from the grave and survey the world of literary criticism today, he could not have done better than Fish does here. Augustine's treatises on lying often strike modern readers as too absurdly demanding and unrealistic. But these objections do not take sufficient account of Augustine's view, shared by Milton, that the dynamics of defiant rebellion undergird and motivate the free play of plural meanings in a monist world. Nor is it enough for the critic to appeal to words that are undoubtedly ambiguous and then leave it up to the reader to decide which meaning to adopt. As we have seen, words often are ambiguous; and readers will at that juncture have to decide which meaning to adopt, a decision that will affect the "feel" and interpretation of the rest of the poem. But that still does not gainsay Milton's and Fish's wider point that Satan is always, in Milton's phrase, "scoffing in ambiguous words." All of Satan's speeches to his minions in Book I or to Eve in Book IX draw on the resources of equivocation. Without polysemy, Satan could get nowhere.

> "Scoffing in ambiguous words" (VI, 586)—saying one thing and meaning another or several others—is at once an ability the devils have and a mode of performance to which they are doomed. The consequence of unmooring oneself from deity is that one loses the point of reference in relation to which entities can be stably defined.

Jean-Paul Sartre once famously said that "hell is other people." For Milton that should be amended to "hell is other equivocators," or, as he puts it, hell is

> *A Universe of death which God by curse*
> *Created evil, for evil only good,*
> *Where all life dies, death lives, and Nature breeds,*
> *Perverse, all monstrous, all prodigious things.*
> (*PL*, II 622-625)

No wonder, then, given such passages as these, that Fish has gained avid fans among such post-liberal Christians as the Catholic Archbishop of Chicago, Francis Cardinal George (who once famously said that Catholic liberalism is an exhausted project), or the Methodist theologian at Duke, Stanley Hauerwas. For inside this astonishingly insightful book can be found a remarkably coherent critique of liberal Enlightenment modernity and her stepchildren, the discordant voices of the postmodern cacophony. And as becomes clear from Fish's book, the two eras, modernity and postmodernity, go together as parent and child and share the same pathos, because of the way a once hegemonic civilization of rationality and abstract principle almost inevitably yielded its achievements over to postmodern incoherence. For once modernity severed the knowing subject from the object to be known and made the knower the manipulator of the known object, a further divorce in our postmodern times became inevitable: that between language and world. And for Fish that declension from Descartes to Derrida describes nothing so much as the sin of Satan:

> Sin *is* the state of being a signifier without a signified, an agency with no inborn direction, a secondary thing no longer connected with that which would give it meaning, an entity severed from the ground of its being and therefore wholly empty. Its only recourse (one mired in self-delusion) is to forget what it doesn't have . . . and to pretend to be the originator of its own stability. This is done exactly as the rebels do it when they make their peace with Sin, now "familiar grown" (II, 761). That is, they get used to her—which is easy, since what they are getting used to is their own condition, the condition of being unattached to anything but themselves.

At this point, the reader (performing his own do-it-yourself reader-response criticism, perhaps?) must be wondering just what is going on here. If a neoconservative is a liberal who has been mugged by reality, has Fish been "mugged by Satan," so to speak, and gone *theo*con? Has he abjured his past flirtations with the "impressionism and relativism" so roundly anathematized by earlier critics? Has reader-response criticism gone out the window? Or has he perhaps converted to Christianity? Has he maybe even become a Puritan divine seeking to convert his readers to his new-found theological monism?

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Well, in a word: No. One must first recall that Stanley Fish likes to come across as a contrarian. For example, he prefers *USA Today* to the *New York Times*, likes shopping malls and soap operas, celebrates consumerism, and remains serenely unawed by the culture of Europe, which in his amusing references sounds suspiciously like a quainter, continent-wide version of Euro Disney, a kind of cultural zoo of medieval castles and yodeling goatherds where Mozart and Beethoven are kept artificially alive in their state-funded cages while the general population goes on its merry way lapping up the latest imports from Hollywood and New York.

Nor does he spare the rod when flogging American academics. He once wrote an amusing essay called "The Unbearable Ugliness of Volvos" that poked fun at the fondness of academics for purchasing ugly cars and dowdy clothing as a badge of authenticity. As he so wickedly puts it: "The reason that academics want and need their complaints is that it is important to them to feel oppressed, for in the psychic economy of the academy, oppression is the sign of virtue." But all of this is couched in prose clearly meant to be impish and not bitter, written with a twinkle in the eye, from a man who likes to tweak the powerful, not antagonize them. In fact, given his colorful ways and contrarian opinions (not to mention his stratospheric salary), the *Chronicle of Higher Education* covers his career much the way *People* magazine covers the marriages of Julia Roberts, a kind of academic version of "Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous."

But a deeper reason than mere contrariness motivates Fish's literary criticism; and to read his earlier work in the light of his latest Milton book points to a feature of his thought too little noted in the past. Fish's own tolerance during his chairmanship at Duke for the cacophony that literary criticism has become, indeed his encouragement of it, does not contradict his exegesis of Milton; rather, that exegesis confirms it. This is because for Milton discordance is the inevitable byproduct of original sin, which is why in the *Areopagitica* he can, with perfect consistency, take a dim view of the pernicious effects in his day of unbridled free speech and yet argue against prior restraint by the government. Once Adam and Eve have been expelled from Eden, and the human race spreads over the globe, a Babel of voices now clamor (literally) for attention; and discernment, at least when done by a hard-and-fast rule or algorithm, becomes impossible, as Fish has so shrewdly seen in his exegesis of the Miltonian Fall:

> If the act of disobedience is a breaking away from the center, one result of disobedience is that the center is no longer easily identifiable, for the link between it and the disobeying actor is precisely what has been removed by what he or she has done. In the prelapsarian condition . . . a link with the center was provided physically by the interdicted tree: refrain from eating from it and the link is maintained; eat of it and the link is broken. . . . This clarity . . . stands in marked (or, rather, unmarked) contrast to the postlapsarian condition, which is burdened by two related difficulties: the true path is no longer so conveniently illuminated by a single focused context, and the vision of those who would rediscover it is irremediably darkened, so that a person's conviction that he is on it and that others (his enemies?) are not can never be supported by independent evidence and can always become a matter of doubt.

At this point the classical Protestant pessimism about the effects of original sin shows its influence on Milton. And it leads him to the classic problem of the Protestant soul: if one is justified only by faith, how is one to know if that faith is real or merely a subjective rush of feeling that will soon vanish as "the flower withereth and the grass fadeth"? Unfortunately, by the nature of the case no evidence can adjudicate the question, because, as we have seen, faith always trumps evidence, indeed even creates it. This pathos is perhaps the source of Fish's lifelong fascination with Milton, and certainly accounts for some of his most eloquent passages, such as this one:

> How can you know that what is presented as an act of faith (I do not say this, Christ does; not me, but my master in me) is not the hubris of someone who wants to have both the first and the last word and only pretends (the pretense may fool *him*) to defer to the word of another? How can you know whether what is being performed here is the triumphant assertion of the poetic will or the surrender of that will (and its pretensions) to the will of God? . . . There are no answers to these questions. Answers would be available only if the world's surfaces directed one (everyone; that's what *public* verification requires) to its true meaning, and it is precisely Milton's contention, as we have seen again and again, that the true meaning can be discerned only by the heart and mind already informed by it, and that therefore neither you nor anyone listening to you can be certain of the source (prideful or faithful) from which your utterances issue.

Admittedly, Milton at first held out the possibility of clear vision in the regenerate. In his intensely antiprelatical tracts written before 1645, Milton speaks of a world in which the truth embodied in a sacred text is known by one group, the Puritans, and rejected by

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

another, the defenders of episcopal prelacy, who clearly are possessed by a false spirit—if not by the Devil, then at least by their own carnal imaginations. As for those who don't see the perspicuity of Scripture shining through the obvious literal meaning of the sacred text, they are too obviously doomed anyway, which is why Milton ends his tracts not with a plea for tolerance but with prayers of execration against the parties opposing him.

But then came his divorce. And as Dr. Johnson dryly noted, "being one of those who could easily find arguments to justify inclination," Milton published in 1644 *The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*, which in a remarkable interpretative sleight of hand managed to interpret away all of the scriptural prohibitions of divorce, a feat of legerdemain "so strenuous," says Fish, "that even the word 'manipulation' is too mild to describe it." For what Milton had to do was to show that when Christ *says* that a man can divorce his wife only for reasons of adultery, "he *means* that a man can put away his wife for any reason he likes."

It has often been noted that an earlier Protestant reverence for the Bible was later transformed into an equally Protestant disintegration of the Bible at the hands of the "higher critics" in nineteenth-century Germany, with the bibliolatry of the first three centuries of the Reformation transmogrifying into the biblical iconoclasm of the last two centuries. But the whole history of Protestant attitudes toward the Bible can actually be seen taking place in the course of Milton's own life. For before his divorce, he defined the regenerate soul as the one that has gained direct access to God's will as that will was attested in the text of Scripture. But after 1645 what was long so clear and available to him in the sacred writings now causes difficulties. And in his response to this dilemma he shows in his own soul the pathos of the liberal Protestant. As Fish puts it, everything now seems different in Milton's world:

> Fallibility of vision is [now] predicated of everyone, not simply of the unregenerate. Consequently there is no one for whom the meaning of Scripture is perspicuous, and interpretation, rather than being forbidden as an unnecessary supplement to a self-declaring word, is enjoined. . . . Choice is no longer a single moment of commitment which is clung to with all one's might; rather, choice must be made again and again in circumstances that demand ever new calculations and recalculations and bring ever new opportunities to go wrong, "to wander . . . forlorn" (*PL* VII, 20).

In that regard Fish is perhaps more of a Miltonist than he himself realizes. For in his descriptions of Milton's world, Fish ends up giving, perhaps unconsciously, a portrait of how he likes to run a department or university, a manifesto that almost reads like a contemporary version of the *Areopagitica*:

> The politics that follows from this vision is one of tolerance and the welcoming of diversity, not because, as in some liberal traditions, tolerance and diversity are valued for their own sake, but because, given the dimness of our individual perceptions, one cannot be sure which of the paths we are urged to go down is the right one.

In other words, no insight, whether generated in the worshiping life of the churches or in the research life of university professors, can be automatically dismissed; for in the words of Milton's own manifesto attacking government oversight of the press, "If it come to prohibiting, there is not ought more likely to be prohibited than truth itself; whose first appearance to your eyes, bleared and dimmed with prejudice and custom, is more unsightly and unplausible than many errors." Milton's defense of a free press, then, is not merely tactical. Fish rightly calls it epistemological, meaning that one must always be alert to the possibilities excluded by the limits of one's present understanding:

> No situation wears its meaning on its face, and thus every moment brings both the obligation to do the right thing and the risk that is attendant upon imperfect knowledge. The world, in short, is a place where the one thing needful (truth, God) is already known, yet access to it is always veiled. Action is enjoined, and one cannot hold back, but the grounds of action are always shifting and challengeable. From the vantage point of eternity all is settled and in place, but in the temporal crucible of human life one experiences only provisionality and the continual hazarding of being. Crisis awaits us at every juncture even though, in the last (which is also the first) analysis, crisis will always be recuperated by a God who effortlessly transubstantiates evil into "more good" (*PL* VII, 616), taking back into himself what he had originally produced.

Milton's epistemology as described here strikes a remarkably Pascalian note, and perhaps it is significant that Milton's life (1608-1674) overlaps at both ends Pascal's much shorter life (1623-1662). Consider how at one point in the *Pensées* Pascal gets to the heart of the believer's central epistemological dilemma: "The metaphysical proofs of God are so far removed from man's reasoning, and so complicated, that they have lit-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tle force. When they do help some people, it is only at the moment when they see the demonstration. An hour later they are afraid of having made a mistake." Milton would agree. And perhaps the greatest merit of Fish's *How Milton Works* emerges when the reader finally comes to see how Pascalian, indeed how modern, Milton really is. "Milton works from the inside out," Fish says. "In the world as he conceives it to be, truth and certainty are achieved not by moving from evidence gathered in discrete bits to general conclusions, but by putting in place general conclusions in the light of which evidence will then appear. Rather than confirming or disconfirming belief, the external landscape, in all of its detail, will be a function of belief."

Not only does this passage accurately describe Milton's theological epistemology, but it also describes the situation as it has to be for all believers, for no other framework could make Satan's sin possible in the first place. After all, God does *not* overwhelm Lucifer with "evidence" of his error. Lucifer's very name ("Lightbearer") already indicates that the Archfiend had all the "evidence" and "light of reason" that he needed. In other words, Satan's sin comes with (to borrow some Kantian terminology) a "transcendental" prerequisite, that is, a condition that must first obtain for a possibility to become actual. And that precondition, which is also the governing principle of all of Fish's writings about the Culture Wars, must be that *interpretation always precedes evidence.* Not only that, but interpretation's priority over evidence begins in heaven, and creates the possibility for hell too:

> If you regard the world as God's book before you ever take a particular look at it, any look you take will reveal, even as it generates, traces of His presence. If, on the other hand, the reality and omnipotence of God is not a basic premise of your consciousness, nothing you see will point to it and no amount of evidence will add up to it. You will miss it entirely, as Mammon does when all he can see in the soil and minerals of hell is material for a home-improvement project, one that will make up for the loss of heaven:
>
> > *Nor will we want skill or art, from whence to raise Magnificence; and what can Heaven show more?* (II, 272-273)
>
> He's not kidding; he really means it. As far as he can see (a colloquialism I take very seriously), there is nothing more to see than what the phenomena of his art and skill will be able to produce; and those phenomena will bring heaven back to him because he never knew what it was in the first place.

The same, of course, must also hold true of the Serpent's temptation of Eve. Satan must now insinuate a new interpretation of God into the mind of Eve. The command not to eat of the Tree, which was first taken for granted as reasonable (even if not to her in any obvious way), must now be seen as stemming from a jealous God. And once that idea has been implanted in her soul, the poison of a false interpretation can be counted on to do its work. It has perhaps not been sufficiently noticed until Fish's book that the first temptation in Eden is a temptation of interpretation, or as he puts it: "One way of thinking of the Fall is as a competition between two teachers of reading."

Nor can any human on earth escape the burden, the hazard, of conceiving God aright, which remains a true wager because evidence does not lead *to* God; on the contrary, evidence only becomes such subsequent to the act of faith, as Fish rightly says: "In the absence of any formal mechanism by which to adjudicate interpretive alternatives we are all in the same endless game, reading an inside which, rather than being confirmed by an outside, generates it."

With this interpretive scheme in mind, Fish can now proceed to his other point, really the converse of his thesis that Milton always works from the inside out. Fish now points out how Milton shows that every temptation takes the form, not just of distorting right interpretation, but also of working from the outside in. In other words, one distorts the truth by working from the outside, gathering evidence like a good Baconian empiricist and, only after patiently assembling the research data, coming to a prejudice-free conclusion. If wide is the road and broad the path that leads to perdition, then for Milton that road goes by the name of Empiricism. In a truly brilliant display of exegetical skill, Fish notes how at each step along the way, the Fall into sin—by Satan, by Mammon, by Eve, and then by Adam—was first prepared by the empirical temptation:

> Whenever a character in Milton's poetry seeks to avoid coming to terms with his or her creaturehood in order to claim a measure (however small) of independence, he or she will have recourse to empirical reasoning. Thus Satan says to Eve, "look on me" (IX, 687), inviting her to substitute the observation of physical processes (in this case illusory) for the first principles she is pledged to maintain. Eve, in her turn, makes literal the substitution when she offers its logic (along with apple) to Adam: "On my experience . . . freely taste" (988). Mammon performs the first physicalist reduction, designed specifically to exclude any recognition

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> of deity and spirit, when he resolves to build a new heaven from the raw materials of hell, a resolution that makes sense to him because his conception of heaven is so relentlessly material: "what can Heaven show more?" (II, 273). Satan shows him the way when with even more audacity he offers cannon and shot as devices for making the rebels equal, perhaps superior, to God. Adam flirts with the same impiety when he demands an account of heavenly movements that would satisfy the criteria of an efficiency expert.

In the last sentence Fish is referring to the scene in Book VIII where the angel Raphael is instructing Adam in astronomy. Although Milton had made a personal visit to Galileo during the latter's house-arrest and for obvious reasons deplored the verdict of the Inquisition against Galileo's heliocentrism, debate in the seventeenth century was still raging among astronomers as to which system was right, the Copernican or the Ptolemaic. Raphael refuses Adam's request for a verdict between the two world systems, and nearly all the commentators have shown how this passage reflects the date of the poem's composition: because Milton could not decide, neither does Raphael. But Fish notices something more crucial at work here. For Raphael replies not by providing an empirical survey of the heavens and then showing how different "models" can fit the data more or less well. Rather, he suggests that if Adam ground his perceptions in a firm faith in God, everything else will fall into place:

> *For the Heaven's wide Circuit, let it speak*
> *The Maker's high Magnificence, who built*
> *So spacious, and his Line stretched out so far,*
> *That Man may know he dwells not in his own;*
> *An Edifice too large for him to fill.* (VIII, 100-104)

Interestingly enough, John Henry Newman takes the same tack in his sermon "Mysteries in Religion," one of the *Parochial and Plain Sermons* devoted to Christ's ascension into heaven. At the outset of the sermon Newman asks the questions likely already to have occurred to his congregation: Where did Christ go? Beyond the stars? Did he traverse the infinity of space? When Newman became a cardinal he famously said that his whole life was spent fighting the liberal attitude toward religion. Now it is of the essence of liberalism to appeal to publicly available evidence, and thus the liberal attitude toward the questions that Newman asks in his sermon is to distinguish in the manner of Rudolf Bultmann the mythological imagery of the ascension from the known realities of the objective world. But this Newman resolutely will not do. Much like Raphael to Adam, or Fish to his readers, Newman insists that God comes first, and God determines the evidence for the ascension in just this manner:

> When we have deduced what we deduce by our reason and from study of visible nature, and then read what we read in His inspired word, and find the two apparently discordant, *this* is the feeling I think we ought to have on our minds—not an impatience to do what is beyond our powers, to weigh evidence, sum up, balance, decide, and reconcile, to arbitrate between the two voices of God—but a sense of the utter nothingness of worms such as we are; of our plain and absolute incapacity to contemplate things *as they really are*; a perception of our emptiness, before the great Vision of God. . . . Thus while we use the language of science, without jealousy, for scientific purposes, we may confine it to these; and repel and reprove its upholders, should they attempt to exalt it and to "stretch it beyond its measure." In its own limited round it has its use, nay, may be made to fill a higher ministry, and stand as a proselyte under the shadow of the temple; but it must not dare profane the inner courts, in which the ladder of Angels is fixed forever, reaching even to the Throne of God, and "Jesus standing on the right hand of God."

Not for nothing, then, did Newman conclude his *Apologia Pro Vita Sua* with a stinging list of liberalism's errors, which to the liberal mind-set is bound to seem "dogmatic," "closed-minded," "narrow," and "rigid"—all terms of abuse in the liberal catalogue of their version of the seven deadly sins. But for Milton, Newman, and (for the most part) Fish too, these are the inevitable *virtues* of the committed mind. For this reason, Fish is also able to provide an account of the connection between liberalism and empiricism that takes on the same tone as Newman's list of liberalism's errors in the *Apologia* (a list that is actually much harsher than the *Syllabus Errorum* of Pope Pius IX). Certainly, the conflict between Christianity and liberalism seems irreconcilable in the formulation of all three men, but perhaps especially in Fish's account, precisely because it is by far the mildest in formulation of the three:

> Liberals believe that facts (of history, justice, science) are independent of the knower, and that it is the knower's obligation to approach the task of knowing with as few preconceptions as possible so that the understanding he finally achieves is impersonal rather than a reflection of his antecedently held views and preferences; one must come to any situation calling for a decision

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> (about what to think or what to say or what to do) with an open mind, a mind prepared to jettison its most cherished convictions should the evidence tell against them. Liberals believe that evidence lies about in the world waiting to be gathered and then arranged in patterns it itself suggests. Liberals believe that if we are sufficiently careful in our gathering of evidence (careful, that is, to keep ourselves and our desires out of the process) the truth will finally emerge in a form everyone (whose mind is open) will acknowledge. Liberals believe that when the truth is to be determined, the meaning (political, moral, legal) of an action, the previous history of the actor—whether he has in the past been a good or bad man—is largely irrelevant and that we should look only to the shape of the present circumstances when assessing him. And because liberals believe in all of the above, they believe in the efficacy of procedures—scientific, parliamentary, judicial—designed to protect us from the overhasty judgments we make when we allow our commitments and allegiances to blind us. Liberals believe that the most important of these procedures is the machinery of rationality, of those laws of logic attached to no agenda or vision, but sufficiently general in their scope as to provide a normative perspective from the vantage point of which any agenda or vision can be assessed and, if necessary, corrected. Liberals believe that communication and persuasion take place (or should take place) in the context of that rationality and that it is possible to bring anyone—except, perhaps, the mentally impaired—to a clear understanding, so long as he or she is willing to set aside or bracket all biases and preconceptions.

By now it should be clear how impossible that worldview and epistemology becomes when dealing with the decision for or against God, for service to God or in service to Satan. The entire account of the Fall of the angels points to that conclusion: that the decision for or against God starts with an interpretation of God and then all the evidence of the outside world is marshaled to support that conclusion.

> [Milton] believes that all the evidence is in and that it points to a single conclusion—we must discern the will of God and do it—that should form the basis of our thought and action in any and all situations. He believes that there is a great divide between those who have reached that conclusion and those who have reached some other; and that communication between the two groups is impossible, because their respective members start from diametrically opposed positions of belief (or nonbelief) and see with different eyes and hear with different ears.

One should perhaps stress here that Fish is not arguing that Milton is an idealist, in the sense of someone who believes that "thinking makes it so" and that unhappy situations can be simply wished away by the cheap expedient of declaring them otherwise. Nor is Fish claiming that Milton thinks that these primal options take place without consequences, which themselves have indicative value. Quite the opposite: nothing could be more fateful, more fraught with consequences for later life. But because these decisions are world-constituting, they end up taking on a life of their own:

> In the act of conceiving of God (an act made necessary by His removal of "His way from human sense") we conceive, bring into being, put into place, a landscape in which actions are labeled "possible," "desirable," mandatory," "unthinkable," and so on; and each time one of those actions is taken or avoided or not seen as a possibility, that landscape becomes ever firmer in its configurations and ever more resistant to a basic alteration. Our conceivings, even though they are grounded in nothing—in no brute empirical datum—produce grounds that one cannot simply wish away, if only because it is against their now-in-place background that wishes (or any other mental actions) could themselves be conceived. Our conceivings, in short, have consequences.

All well and good, but perhaps Fish does not sufficiently notice this point. No doubt he is correct that initial decisions have later consequences, so that past sins bring with them a certain momentum. But precisely because decisions carry such fateful consequences later, these subsequent effects can be put to use in what the Western ascetical literature calls *discernment*. Consider the case of Satan himself in the course of *Paradise Lost*. As C. S. Lewis puts it, his declension in the first nine books goes like this: "From hero to general, from general to politician to secret service agent, and thence to a thing that peers in at bedroom or bathroom windows, and thence to a toad, and finally to a snake—such is the progress of Satan."

In many eerie ways, this echoes the devolution of Adolf Hitler, although he began as a politician, then became his own amateur general (and a stubborn, unteachable one, and therefore a bad one); and then, pretty much skipping the whole serpent phase, he ended up as a spent, pathetic, vegetarian toad. But for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the longest time, he held the German nation mesmerized. And that is the key. It would of course be both vulgar and unfair to ascribe to Romanticism the "blame" for this weird hypnotic power that Hitler had; but the fact remains that the self-evident and openly expressed malevolence of the man, which he made no effort to hide in *Mein Kampf*, did not seem in any way ugly to the masses who followed him. In fact, it was part of his appeal.

But when we who live now in the next century look back on the career of Nazism, surely it can be our office to see the results and make judgments accordingly. But in many ways, we deprive ourselves of any basis for doing so by continuing to find Satan mesmerizing in the first two books of *Paradise Lost*. As Lewis sardonically notes, "The poet did not foresee that his work would one day meet the disarming simplicity of critics who take for gospel things said by the father of falsehood in public speeches to his troops." As nearly all critics would agree, the attractiveness that Satan displays in the first two books partly stems from the impact of Romanticism; but as Fish already noted in his first Milton book, the human condition will always find Satan attractive, at least until he can capture the soul, for that susceptibility to the devil's charms is part of the legacy of original sin. As the French Jewish mystic Simone Weil says so well: "Imaginary evil is romantic and varied, full of charm, while imaginary good is tiresome and flat. Real evil, however, is dreary, monotonous, barren. But real good is always new, marvelous, intoxicating."

If *How Milton Works* has any flaw (besides a certain repetitiousness that comes from the fact that the middle of the book is composed of journal articles previously published), it is a failure to take account of Weil's insight. Life catches up with everyone, and Milton's corollary to that fundamental law of nature might be: "Sin catches up with everyone." In fact, the whole purpose of the discernment of spirits coincides with Milton's purpose in writing *Paradise Lost*: as Fish has rightly seen (and he was the first to do so), Milton wants us to live through the consequences of sin in our imaginative reenactment of salvation history (no wonder he felt that *Paradise Regained* was the capstone of his work) in order to keep us from the more dire lessons that life imparts. Such, too, was the purpose of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius Loyola: to get the exercitant (not the "reader," for the Exercises are meant to be genuine, strenuous "exercises") to *live* through and thus to *see* through the enticement of evil by testing the spirits in the manner laid out by Ignatius:

> 1) In the case of those who go from one mortal sin to another, the enemy is ordinarily accustomed to propose apparent pleasures. He fills their imagination with sensual delights and gratifications, the more readily to keep them in their vices and increase the number of their sins. With such persons the good spirit uses a method which is the reverse of the above. Making use of the light of reason, he will rouse the sting of conscience and fill them with remorse.
>
> 2) In the case of those who go on earnestly striving to cleanse their souls from sin and who seek to rise in the service of God our Lord to greater perfection, the method pursued is the opposite of that mentioned in the first rule. Then it is characteristic of the evil spirit to harass with anxiety, to afflict with sadness, to raise obstacles backed by fallacious reasonings that disturb the soul. Thus he seeks to prevent the soul from advancing. It is characteristic of the good spirit, however, to give courage and strength, consolations, tears, inspirations, and peace. This he does by making all easy, by removing all obstacles so that the soul goes forward in doing good.

This passage not only has direct bearing on Fish's brilliant reader-response thesis, but also helps explain why, in a sense, the Romantics have a point about Milton belonging to the Devil's party without quite realizing it; for according to St. Ignatius' Rules for the Discernment of Spirits quoted above, that also holds true for everyone. But the Romantics then miss the point of their legitimate insight when they claim that Milton would have been content to let that sympathy work its effects outside of the economy of salvation. As Lewis says with his usual lapidary flair: "It is therefore right to say that Milton has put much of himself into Satan; but it is unwarrantable to conclude that he was pleased with that part of himself or expected us to be pleased. Because he was, like the rest of us, damnable, it does not follow that he was, like Satan, damned."

Readers of this journal know that the editors offered the hospitality of their pages to Stanley Fish, where many of the views outlined above were set forth by the author in essay form, to which Richard John Neuhaus then replied (FT, February 1996). What strikes me on rereading that exchange is how much their debate hinged on a proper interpretation of Milton, with Fish insisting on the same views now developed at fuller length in *How Milton Works*, and Neuhaus insisting that Milton would agree with his own assertion that "one's decision for a 'first premise' is a reasoned decision." And later in his reply, Father Neuhaus sounds remarkably Miltonian when he says that "Christianity does propose a unified conception of life, but that unified conception of life comprehends and makes possible the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

pluralistic character of life as we experience it," which among other things neatly summarizes the argument of Milton's *Areopagitica*.

But aside from these assertions, I wonder if another possibility might be entertained: that Fish is (largely) right in his exegesis of Milton's poetry and prose, but that Neuhaus is also largely right in his defense of a Christian liberalism (in the sense of participating in the liberal conversation with a good conscience), but only because in certain key respects *Milton is wrong*. In asserting this I am partly alluding to key flaws in Milton's personality, not to make an ad hominem attack so much as to point out how those flaws then influence (to its detriment) Milton's theology. In this I am relying on a key passage in Dr. Johnson's essay on Milton in his *Lives of the Poets,* where he links Milton's politics and Puritan contempt for bishops with a notably intolerant personality:

> Milton's republicanism was, I am afraid, founded in an envious hatred of greatness, and a sullen desire of independence; in petulance impatient of control, and pride disdainful of superiority. He hated monarchs in the state and prelates in the church; for he hated all whom he was required to obey. It is to be suspected that his predominant desire was to destroy rather than establish, and that he felt not so much the love of liberty as a repugnance to authority. It has been observed that they who most loudly clamor for liberty do not most liberally grant it. What we know of Milton's character in domestic relations is that he was severe and arbitrary. His family consisted of women; and there appears in his books something like a Turkish contempt of females, as subordinate and inferior beings. That his own daughters might not break the ranks, he suffered them to be depressed by a mean and penurious education. He thought woman made only for obedience, and man only for rebellion.

It should therefore cause no surprise in the reader to learn that Milton was perfectly able and willing to contravene the plain sense of Scripture in his divorce tracts when it suited him, for his doctrine of the Inner Light, coupled with his skeptical theological epistemology, would naturally lead him to rely on his own judgment alone. Thus, after roundly condemning the episcopal polity of the Established Church, he then later found himself roundly condemned for his divorce tracts by fellow Puritans, which in turn led to the inevitable outcome that he belonged to a church of one, himself. Again, Dr. Johnson has understood, perhaps better than anyone else, the astigmatism entailed by this ecclesiastical solipsism:

> To be of no church is dangerous. Religion, of which the rewards are distant and which is animated only by faith and hope, will glide by degrees out of mind unless it be invigorated and reimpressed by external ordinances, by stated calls to worship, and the salutary influence of example. Milton, who appears to have had full conviction of the truth of Christianity, and to have regarded the Holy Scriptures with the profoundest veneration, to have been untainted by an heretical peculiarity of opinion [Johnson of course wrote this before Milton's heretical manuscripts were discovered], and to have lived in a confirmed belief of the immediate and occasional agency of Providence, yet grew old without any visible worship. In the distribution of his hours, there was no hour of prayer, either solitary or with his household; omitting public prayers, he omitted all. Of this omission the reason has been sought, upon a supposition which ought never to be made, that men live with their own approbation and justify their conduct to themselves.

In other words, Milton's deficient ecclesiology leads to precisely the kind of faith in God that will strike Fish, rightly, as being so terrifyingly unmoored by any evidence or reasonability. The literal meaning of "self-righteous" refers to people who, in Dr. Johnson's terms, "justify their conduct to themselves." Although the term usually also connotes an unpleasantly arrogant person, one may still legitimately call Milton literally "self-righteous" without making any reference to flaws in his character (though no doubt Johnson is correct in seeing some sort of link between the two, especially in Milton's relations with his wives and daughters). In fact, the pathos of the Protestant appeal to faith alone need not be accompanied by any defect of personality at all. I do not in any way dispute Fish's assertion that Milton always works from the inside out and thereby regards all empiricism as Satanic infidelity. But that precisely is Milton's *flaw*, and it is a flaw that can be seen to crop up in Protestant theology down through the ages, including in one so orthodox as Karl Barth. Consider this passage from his *Commentary on Romans*:

> There is no fragment or epoch of history that can be pronounced divine. The whole history of the Church and of all religion takes place in this world. What is called the "history of our salvation" is not an event in the midst of other events, but is nothing less than the *krisis* of all history. There are no saints in the midst of a company of sinners; for where men have claimed to be saints, they are thereby marked as not-saints. Their criticism and invective and indictment of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

> the world inevitably place them—unless they be themselves the object—within the course of this world and betray that they too are of it. Their indictment springs not from their capacity to help but from their own distress; it is of this world; it is a talking about life, not life itself; its illumination is artificial; it marks no rising of the sun nor breaking of the dawn. This is as true of Paul, the prophet and apostle of the Kingdom of God, and of Jeremiah, as it is of Luther, Kierkegaard, and Blumhardt! It applies both to St. Francis, who far surpassed Jesus in "love," childlikeness, and austerity, and to the distinctive sanctity of Tolstoy. Everything human swims with the stream either with vehement protest or with easy accommodation, even when it appears to hover about it or to engage in conflict with it. Christ is not one of the righteous. Since power belongs only to God, it is the tragic story of every man of God that he has to contend for the right of God by placing himself in the wrong.

Here once more, we find a passage from a Protestant who has long been taken to be the very antithesis of the liberal Protestant (and from the book that was written to be the death knell of liberal Protestantism), providing the same theological monism and skeptical epistemology that Milton first adumbrated and which led, at least in Milton's case, to the very liberal attitudes he had once so actively deplored. Of course, in Barth's case, the contradictions so openly embraced in *Romans* eventually yielded to the more robust consistency of the aptly named *Church Dogmatics*. But even there the issue of what constitutes the Church and how one becomes a member of it remained unresolved. I suppose as a Catholic, I would be bound to say that, and Professor Fish would probably take that concession to be one more indication of a "primal decision" determining how the evidence will be used, indeed what constitutes evidence at all. I am willing to grant the point, but would like to note that one may also take the complete marginalization of Barth's theology in the contemporary Protestant world as at least an indication that his ecclesiology was defective. Like John Henry Newman trying to speak for the High Church Anglicans in Tract 90 and being repudiated by the very people he was trying to support, Barth wanted to speak for churches that eventually grew deaf to his pealing of the Barthian bell.

But just as no one should dismiss Barth in his entirety on that account, so too with Milton—which brings us once more to the considerable merits of Stanley Fish's book. For he has alerted us, as no other critic has done since Lewis, that Milton is above all a theologian, indeed a theologian the reading of whom prods us to a decision, a decision that could not be more basic. As Dr. Johnson said in wondrous prose: "We all, indeed, feel the effects of Adam's disobedience; we all sin like Adam, and like him must all bewail our offenses; we have restless and insidious enemies in the fallen angels, and in the blessed sprits we have guardians and friends; in the redemption of mankind we hope to be included: in the description of heaven and hell we are surely interested, as we are all to reside hereafter either in the regions of horror or of bliss."

Unfortunately, as Johnson also noted, these truths can become so habitual (or in our civilization so unfamiliar) that the artist scarcely knows how to make them newly vivid so that the reader can genuinely reenact their drama: "Being therefore not new, they raise no unaccustomed emotion in the mind; what we knew before, we cannot learn; what is not unexpected, cannot surprise." But, he says,

> known truths . . . may take a different appearance, and be conveyed to the mind by a new train of intermediate images. This Milton has undertaken and performed with pregnancy and vigor of mind peculiar to himself. Whoever considers [the sparse basic materials] which the Scriptures afforded him will wonder by what energetic operation he expanded them to such extent and ramified them to so much variety, restrained as he was by religious reverence from licentiousness of fiction.

But Milton managed it. And by giving us the most remarkable works of Milton interpretation in our generation, Stanley Fish has done the same. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Does God Suffer?

Thomas G. Weinandy

Some readers may think this an odd article to be published by "a journal of religion and public life." It is an exercise in theology, philosophy, and the history of ideas on a question that may seem far removed from anything that might be called public life. In fact, however, it is pressingly pertinent to the Church's most important public task: communicating the gospel, and doing so in a culture whose dominant virtues are compassion, empathy, and, as it is sometimes put, feeling one another's pain. In such a culture, it is very tempting to speak of God as compassionate, empathic, and, therefore, suffering as we suffer. I believe that temptation should be resisted. Understanding why it should calls for a careful examination of relevant considerations in theology, philosophy, and the history of ideas.

From the dawn of the Patristic period Christian theology has held as axiomatic that God is impassible—that is, He does not undergo emotional changes of state, and so cannot suffer. Toward the end of the nineteenth century a sea change began to occur within Christian theology such that at present many, if not most, Christian theologians hold as axiomatic that God *is* passible, that He does undergo emotional changes of states, and so can suffer. Historically this change was inaugurated by such Anglican theologians as Andrew M. Fairbairn and Bertrand R. Brasnett. Within contemporary Protestant theology some of the better known theologians who espouse the passibility of God are Karl Barth, Richard Bauckham, James Cone, Paul Fiddes, Robert Jenson, Eberhard Jüngel, Kazoh Kitamori, Jung Young Lee, John Macquarrie, Jürgen Moltmann, Wolfhart Pannenberg, Richard Swinburne, Alan Torrance, Thomas F. Torrance, Keith Ward, and Nicholas Wolterstorff.

Among Catholic theologians, while they may differ as to the exact manner and extent of God's passibility, one nonetheless finds a strange mix of theological bedfellows. They include, among others, Raniero Cantalamessa, Jean Galot, Hans Urs von Balthasar, Roger Haight, Elizabeth Johnson, Hans Küng, Michael Sarot, and Jon Sobrino. Of course one must add the host of Process Theologians who, following the lead of Albert North Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne, hold, by the very character of their philosophical position, that God is by nature passible and so can suffer. This theological shift has been so overwhelming, so thorough, and has been achieved with such unquestioned assurance that Ronald Goetz has simply, and in a sense rightly, dubbed it the "new orthodoxy."

What has brought about such a radical reconception of God? How, in only one hundred years, has the Christian theological tradition of almost two thousand years, so readily and so assuredly, seemingly been overturned? There are basically three factors that have contributed to this change: the prevailing social and cultural milieu, modern interpretation of biblical revelation, and contemporary trends in philosophy.

It was originally human suffering that became the catalyst for espousing a passible and thus suffering God. Surely, God must suffer in solidarity with those who suffer. This was first expressed within the context of the social ills of industrial Britain in the late-nineteenth century. However, the icon that has come to embody this assumption is Auschwitz. Jürgen Moltmann, in *The Crucified God*, was the first to employ Elie Wiesel's graphic and horrific story (which has subsequently appeared in over thirty books and articles) of a Jewish boy hung by the Nazis along with two men in the

THOMAS G. WEINANDY *is a Capuchin priest and the Warden of Greyfriars, Oxford. He tutors and lectures in History and Doctrine at the University of Oxford. His book* Does God Suffer? *was published last year by the University of Notre Dame Press.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

camp at Buna (Moltmann wrongly places it in Auschwitz). It took half an hour for the youth to die and, as the men of the camp watched his torment, one asked: "Where is God now?" Wiesel heard a voice within him answer: "Where is He? He is here. He is hanging there on the gallows." While Wiesel interpreted his inner voice as expressing what has now become disbelief in a loving and just God, Moltmann exploited the story to argue for a God who suffers in union with those who suffer. In the midst of the Holocaust and hundreds of other contemporary occurrences of horrendous human suffering, this argument, often expressed with passionate sentiment and emotion, continues to win theological adherents. How can God be an immutable, impassible, idle, and indifferent bystander in the midst of such unspeakable suffering? If God is a loving and compassionate God, as He surely is, He must not only be aware of human suffering, but He must also Himself be an "active" victim of such suffering. He, too, must suffer.

This contemporary experience of human suffering, which seemed to demand a passible God, found a ready ally and firm warrant, it appeared, within the biblical revelation of God. The Old Testament seems to give ample proof that He not only is passible but that He also indeed suffers. God revealed Himself to be a personal, loving, and compassionate God who has freely engaged Himself in, and so ensconced Himself within, human history. He mercifully heard the cry of His enslaved people in Egypt and determined to rescue them. Moreover, God revealed Himself, especially in the prophets, to be a God who grieved over the sins of His people. He was distressed by their unfaithfulness, and suffered over their sinful plight. So disheartened was God by their hard-heartedness that He actually became angry. However, "my heart recoils within me; my compassion grows warm and tender. I will not execute my fierce anger; I will not again destroy Ephraim; for I am God and not mortal; the Holy One in your midst and I will not come in wrath" (Hosea 11:8-9). Thus God in the Old Testament suffers on account of, with, and on behalf of His people. Ultimately it is the revelation of His love that demands that God suffer. Expressing the sentiment of many, Moltmann writes: "Were God incapable of suffering in any respect, and therefore in an absolute sense, then He would also be incapable of love."

Moreover, the heart of the Christian kerygma is that the Son of God became man and lived an authentic human life. Within that human life the Son's death on the cross stands as the consummate event. From the Incarnation and the cross theologians argue for God's passibility on three interconnected levels. First, it is because God has always suffered with those He loved that He sent His Son into the world. The cross then expresses fully God's eternal divine nature and thus is the paradigm of a suffering God. Second, while the Christian Christological tradition has always upheld the truth that the Son of God suffered as man, though not as God, contemporary theologians find such a distinction illogical and therefore unacceptable. If the Son of God actually became man, then He not only suffered as man but such suffering must have washed into His very divinity as well. Third, the Son, on the cross, did not then merely experience the abandonment of the Father as man but equally as God. Moreover, such abandonment simultaneously pertains to the Father's own experience. The Father suffered the loss of His Son. Thus the suffering cry of dereliction was a cry being experienced within the very depths of God's passible nature.

Now, the world was not immune from human suffering until the last two centuries, nor had Christians ceased consulting the Bible. Why, then, did what now seems so obviously true only become evident after nearly two thousand years of Christian theology? According to many contemporary theologians, Greek philosophical thought, especially Platonism, had hijacked biblical revelation. The static, inert, self-sufficient, immutable, and impassible God of Platonic thought usurped, via Philo and the early Church Fathers, the living, personal, active, loving, and so passible God of the Bible. This philosophical and theological deformity, having entered into the very genetic make-up of the Christian gospel, bred its mature distorted offspring within Scholasticism, especially in the writings of Aquinas. Only relatively recently, especially in the wake of Hegel and the rise of Process Philosophy, have theologians perceived the extent of the deformity and so been able therapeutically to redesign the authentic genetic structure of the gospel. Actually, the curative procedure is easily done. One only needs to hold that God is neither immutable nor impassible, but is both mutable and passible, and so He suffers. Presto, the gospel is once more, philosophically and theologically, its vibrant self.

I would acknowledge that the above arguments are, even in the brief summary form that I have presented them, intellectually and emotionally powerful, though often the emotional sentiment appears to far outweigh reasoned argument. Nonetheless, I believe that the entire project on behalf of a passible and so suffering God is utterly misconceived, philosophically and theologically. It wreaks total havoc upon the authentic Christian gospel.

In considering this matter, the first issue that must be addressed is the nature of God as revealed within the biblical narrative, for ultimately the question of His impassibility or passibility must be in conformity with it.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Undeniably the Old Testament speaks of God as though He did undergo, at different times and in diverse situations, emotional changes of state, including that of suffering. However, I believe that such passages must be understood and interpreted within the deeper and broader revelation of who God is. While the Old Testament does not philosophically or theologically address the issue of God's impassibility or passibility, it does provide the revelational context from which it must be examined. This context consists in rightly discerning the biblical notion of God's transcendence and immanence. The manner in which God both transcends the created order and is present to and immanently acts within the created order will ultimately control whether He is passible or impassible. Now, within the Old Testament, it is precisely the very immanent actions of God that reveal the character of His transcendence. What then do these immanent actions reveal about the transcendent God?

God, in initiating the covenant and acting within it, manifested that He possessed at least four fundamental characteristics that set Him apart as God. First, He is the One God. While the Old Testament never treats the philosophical issue of "the One and the Many," the fact is that the more the unique oneness of God matured within the biblical faith the more God was differentiated from everything else—the many. Thus, to say that God is one not only specified that there is numerically only one God, but also that, being one, He is distinct from all else. His oneness speaks His transcendence.

Second, God is the Savior. As Savior His will and actions are not frustrated by worldly power or might, or by the vicissitudes of history, or even by the limitations of the natural physical order. Thus, the very same immanent salvific actions of God that manifested His relationship to His people equally identified His complete otherness. God could be the mighty Savior only because He transcended all this-worldly and cosmic forces.

Third, the mighty God who saves is the powerful God who creates. As Creator, God is intimately related to and cares for His good creation, particularly His chosen people, and yet, as Creator, He is not one of the things created, and is thus completely other than all else that exists.

Fourth, God is All Holy. God sanctified the Israelites for they were covenanted to Him as the All Holy God. God's holiness distinguished Him (the root of the Semitic word "holiness" means "to cut off") from all that was profane and sinful. Even when the Israelites defiled themselves by sin and infidelity, God Himself was not defiled. Rather it is specifically because He is the transcendent (the "cut-off") Holy One, and so incapable of being defiled, that He could restore them to holiness.

For God, then, to be transcendent does not mean that there are certain aspects of His being that are distinct from those aspects of His being that allow Him to be immanent. For the Old Testament, that which makes God truly divine and thus transcendent is that which equally allows Him to be active within the created order and so be immanent. To say that God is the One All Holy Creator and Savior is to express His immanent activity within the created order as the one who is not a member of that created order. This is the great Judeo-Christian mystery, which finds its ultimate expression in the Incarnation: He who is completely other than the created order can be present to and active within the created order without losing His complete otherness in so doing.

To undermine the transcendent otherness of God in order to make God seemingly more immanent undermines the very significance of His immanence. The importance of God's immanent activity is predicated in direct proportion to His transcendence. It is precisely because God transcends the whole created order of time and history that His immanent actions within time and history acquire singular significance. The one who is in the midst of His people is "The Lord [who] is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He does not faint or grow weary, His understanding is unsearchable" (Isaiah 40:28, see also the whole of chapters 40-45).

From within this biblical context of the immanent activity of the totally transcendent God, God is said to undergo emotional changes of state or even to change His mind. While such statements say something literally true about God, they are, I believe, not to be taken literally. Such statements do wish to inform us that God is truly compassionate and forgiving. He does grieve over sin and is angry with His people. However, such emotional states, firstly, are predicated not upon a change in God but upon a change within the others involved. God is sorry that He created human beings (Genesis 6:6-7) and that He appointed Saul king (1 Samuel 15:11,35) because they have become sinful. He relents of His anger and threatened punishment of the Ninevites (Jonah 4:2) and of the Israelites because they have repented (Exodus 32:14). Such reactions or changes predicated of God actually express a deeper truth—that of God's unchanging and unalterable love and justice as the transcendent other.

It follows, secondly, that God is said "to change His mind" or is portrayed as undergoing differing emotional states precisely because, as the transcendent God, He does *not* change His mind or undergo emotional changing states. "God is not a human being, that He should lie, or a mortal, that He should change His mind" (Numbers 23:9, also Psalms 110:4, 132:11, Ezekiel 24:14). The very language used, such as com-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

passion, sorrow, suffering, anger, forgiveness, and relenting, seeks to express God's unswerving and unalterable transcendent nature as the One All Holy God who is Savior and Creator. The predication of various emotional changes of state within God are not literal statements of His passibility, but illustrate and verify the literal truth that God, being transcendent, far from being fickle as men are, is unalterably, within all variable circumstances, all-loving, all-good, and all-holy.

Some argue that such an understanding of the biblical notion of God only demonstrates His ethical immutability, that is, that He is consistently true to Himself as morally good and loving and not necessarily that He is ontologically immutable. However, I would argue that, for God to be ethically immutable, unchangeably loving and good, demands that He is ontologically immutable—that is, ontologically unchanging in His perfect love and goodness.

While the Fathers of the Church are often accused of transforming the living, loving, compassionate, and personal God of the Bible into the static, lifeless, inert, and impersonal God of Greek philosophy, this is clearly false, though there was the occasional misstep. What the early Fathers, such as Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian, and Novatian brought to the long-standing philosophical colloquium concerning the nature of God was not primarily their own philosophical acumen, but their faith in the biblical God.

In keeping with biblical revelation, as opposed to pagan mythologies, they were concerned with upholding the complete otherness of the one God in relationship to the created order. They accentuated and clarified, against Platonism and Aristotelianism, that God did not merely order or set in motion preexistent matter but that, by His almighty power, He created all out of nothing—*creatio ex nihilo*. God was then no longer merely at the pinnacle of a hierarchy of being, but His transcendence, as Creator, radically placed Him within a distinct ontological order of His own. As such He was the perfectly good and loving personal God who eternally existed in and of Himself.

In order to accentuate these positive biblical attributes the Fathers predicated of God a whole cluster of negative attributes, some of which are directly biblical in origin and some of which came from philosophical reflection. These negative attributes served a twofold purpose. They primarily were employed to distinguish God from the created order, but in so doing they equally gave more noetic content to the positive attributes. For example, unlike the anthropomorphic pagan gods, God was incorporeal and so did not possess physical feelings, passions, and needs such as pain, lust, and hunger. This enhanced in turn the spiritual nature of His being. In the light of this complementary and reciprocal interplay between these positive and negative attributes, the early Fathers insisted that God was immutable and impassible.

Negatively, God is immutable in the sense that He does not change as do creatures, but He does not change for positive reasons as well. God's immutability radically affirms and profoundly intensifies the absolute perfection and utter goodness of God, who, as Creator, is the one who truly lives and exists. Because God's love is unchangeably perfect and so cannot diminish, He is then the eternally living God who is unreservedly dynamic in His goodness, love, and perfection. Similarly, while the divine attribute of impassibility primarily tells us what God is not, it does so for entirely positive reasons. God is impassible in that He does not undergo successive and fluctuating emotional states, nor can the created order alter Him in such a way so as to cause Him to suffer any modification or loss. Nor is God the possessor of negative and sinful passions as are human beings, with their susceptibility to fear, anxiety, dread, greed, lust, or unjust anger. For the Fathers, to deny that God is passible is to deny of Him all such passions that would debilitate or cripple Him as God. Almost all the early Fathers attributed impassibility to God in order to safeguard and enhance His utterly passionate love and all-consuming goodness, that is, the divine fervor and zealous resolve with which He pursues the well-being of His cherished people. Origen, for example, while ardently upholding God's impassibility, can equally speak of His "passion of love" for fallen humankind. Even God's anger was not conceived by the Fathers as a separate passion or intermittent emotional state within Himself, but as constitutive of His unchanging perfect goodness and providential care in the face of sin and evil.

The present critique of the Fathers is then entirely misconceived. Contemporary theologians wrongly hold that the attribute of impassibility is ascribing something positive of God, that is, that He is static, lifeless and inert, and so completely devoid of passion. This the Fathers never countenanced. The Fathers were merely denying of God those passions that would imperil or impair those biblical attributes that were constitutive of His divine being. They wished to preserve the wholly otherness of God, as found in Scripture, and equally, also in accordance with Scripture, to profess and enrich, in keeping with His complete otherness, an understanding of His passionate love and perfect goodness.

Aquinas brought new depth both to this patristic understanding of God and to our understanding of why He is immutable and impassible. Creatures constantly change because they continually actualize their potential either for good, and so become more perfect,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or for evil, and so become less perfect. God is not in this act/potency scheme of self-actualization. God, Aquinas argued, is "being itself" or "pure act" and so cannot undergo self-constituting change by which He would become more perfect. Two pertinent points flow from this.

First, by being pure act, God possesses the potential to perform acts that are singular to His being pure act. While we cannot comprehend how God, as pure act, acts, the act of creation is God acting as pure act, whereby created beings are related to God as He is and so come to exist. Thus, the very act of creation that assures the wholly otherness of God is the very same act that assures creation's immediate, intimate, dynamic, and enduring relationship with God as God truly is in all His transcendent otherness. Second, as pure act or being itself, all that pertains to God's nature is in pure act. While God and rocks may both be impassible, they are so for polar opposite reasons. A rock is impassible because, being an inert impersonal object, it lacks all that pertains to love. God is impassible because His love is perfectly in act ("God is love") and no further self-constituting act could make Him more loving. God is absolutely impassible because He is absolutely passionate in His love. Thus creatures, and particularly human beings, through the act of creation are immediately and intimately related to God as He exists in His perfectly actualized love.

On the theological level, the persons of the Trinity are impassible for similar reasons. The Father is the pure act of paternity for He is the act by which He begets the Son in the perfect love of the Holy Spirit. The Son is the pure act of sonship for He is the act by which He is wholly the Son of and for the Father in the same perfect love of the Spirit. The Spirit is the pure act of love for He is that act by which the Father is conformed to be the absolutely loving Father of the Son and the Son is conformed to be the absolutely loving Son of the Father. Thus the persons of the Trinity are impassible not because they are devoid of passion, but because they are entirely constituted as who they are in their passionate and dynamic fully actualized relationship of love. Creatures, as merely created, are immediately related to this trinitarian mystery of love, and human beings can actually abide within the very trinitarian relationships by being conformed by the Holy Spirit into the likeness of the Son and so becoming children of the loving Father.

While I will now limit myself to speaking in terms of the one God rather than to the Trinity in order to simplify the grammar and syntax, what is said could be equally applied to the Trinity. Now, because God is fully actualized in His love and goodness, He cannot be deprived of that love and goodness which would cause Him to suffer, for to suffer such loss would make Him less than perfectly loving and good. Moreover—and here we touch the heart of the issue—it must be remembered, in accordance with the biblical notion of God, that while God is intimately related to creation as its Creator, He exists in His own distinct ontological order as the Creator. Therefore, the sin and evil that deprive human beings of some good and so cause them to suffer is contained wholly within the created ontological order and cannot reverberate or wash back into the uncreated order where God alone exists as absolutely good. If the sin and evil of the created order caused God to suffer, it would demand that God and all else would exist in the same ontological order, for only if He existed in the same ontological order in which the evil was enacted could He then suffer.

This is why most of the theologians who espouse a suffering God intentionally advocate a panentheistic notion of God—that is, that while God is potentially more than the cosmos, the cosmos is constitutive of His very being. (Those theologians who espouse a suffering God but deny panentheism fail to grasp the logic of their own position.) Being ensconced within the cosmic order God must necessarily assume all that pertains to that order, including sin and the suffering it causes. However, if His very nature is constituted by His being a member of the cosmic order, then He can no longer be its all-loving Creator. He becomes merely the one who attempts to bring order to the cosmic process after the manner of the Platonic Demiurge. Equally, since evil, which causes suffering, is the privation of some good, it would mean that a suffering God was deprived of some good and thus He would no longer be perfectly good. Moreover, if God, having lost His singular transcendence, is now infected by evil and suffering, then He too is immanently enmeshed in an evil cosmic process from which He, like all else, cannot escape.

God may now suffer in union with all who suffer—and those who espouse a suffering God boast this to be of singular value—but in so suffering, humankind, and even God Himself, are deprived of any hope of ever being freed from evil and so the suffering that it causes. There is no hope of divine justice ever setting things right nor is there any hope of love and goodness vanquishing evil. The transcendent One All-Holy God of the Bible who, as Creator, is present to all creation, and who, as Savior, acts immanently within that creation, vanishes. Thus, a suffering God is not only philosophically and theologically untenable, but also religiously devastating.

Human beings have to enact various aspects of love depending on the situation. Sometimes love requires kindness or compassion or mercy or forgiveness. At other times it demands corrections and even anger. However, because God's love is perfectly existent,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all aspects that pertain to that love are fully existent. God does not need, therefore, sequentially, in a passible manner, to enact these various facets of love in accordance with changing situations. God is always in "go position," so to speak. For example, when a person repents of sin, God need not change the manner of His love within Himself from that of an admonishing love to that of a forgiving love. If God did need to adapt and re-adapt and re-adapt Himself again to every personal situation in every momentary instance, He would be perpetually entangled in an unending internal emotional whirligig. Correlatively, human beings are able to know in faith or even experience the various facets of God's fully actualized love in accordance with their personal situation. In sin they experience God's love as rebuke and admonishment. In repentance they experience God's love as compassion and forgiveness. But it is God's unchanging love that is moving them and they experience that unchanging love in various ways as they move.

More specifically, God's compassion is then subsumed and contained within His perfectly actualized love, but now, unlike human compassion, it is devoid of the suffering that would render His love less than perfectly actualized. God is perfectly compassionate not because He suffers with those who suffer, but because His love fully and freely embraces those who suffer. The absence of suffering in God actually liberates God from any self-love that would move Him to act to relieve His own suffering. The absence of suffering allows God's love to be completely altruistic and beneficent. What human beings cry out for in their suffering is not a God who suffers, but a God who loves wholly and completely, something a suffering God could not do. As Michael Dodds has perceptively written, "If it were my friend's compassionate suffering itself that brought me consolation, then I would be in the peculiar situation of reacting in quite the opposite way to my friend's suffering from the way that he reacts to mine. For I would be taking some sort of joy in his suffering while he reacts rather with sadness at my own."

It is love and not suffering that ultimately is at the heart of compassion, for it is love that brings true healing and comfort. Thus for Aquinas "mercy is especially to be attributed to God, as seen in its effects, but not as an affection of passion." The truly compassionate person endeavors to dispel the cause of suffering, and thus God's mercy and compassion is most clearly manifested in His divine power and perfect goodness through which He overcomes evil and the suffering that it causes. While I would agree with Aquinas that mercy is not "an affection of passion" in the sense that it is a passible emotional state within God, I would see it, nonetheless, as a positive facet of His perfectly actualized and so completely altruistic love.

The compassion of God is seen then not in His suffering in solidarity with humankind, but in His ability to alleviate the cause of human suffering—sin. Here we witness the good news of the gospel and its evangelistic importance. The eternal Son of God, sent by the Father, came to exist as an authentic man by the power of the Holy Spirit. In becoming man the Son assumed our fallen humanity inherited from Adam, and so as one of us lived a holy life of obedience to the Father which culminated in the offering of His life on the cross to the Father as a loving sacrifice of atonement for sin. Thus the Son of God, who is impassible as God, truly suffered and died as man and as a man truly rose bodily from the dead. The import of this, in the light of the contemporary espousal of a suffering God, must be clearly grasped.

First, in accordance with the authentic Christological tradition, the eternal, all-perfect, and immutable Son of God experienced, as man, human weakness, frailty, suffering, and death in a truly and authentically human manner. He who is impassible as God was truly passible as man. As Cyril of Alexandria poignantly put it: "The Impassible suffers." However, since it was the Son of God who suffered, did He not equally experience such suffering within His divinity? No, for suffering is caused by the loss of some good, and while as man the Son was deprived of His human well-being and life, He was not deprived of any divine perfection or good. Moreover, to hold that the Son suffered as God would mean that He experienced our human suffering in a mitigated divine manner, and thus that He did not truly experience authentic human suffering. God in the end would not truly experience suffering and death as men experience suffering and death. Ironically, those who advocate a suffering God, having locked suffering within God's divine nature, have actually locked God out of human suffering.

Second, and most significantly, it was the human suffering and death of the Son, enacted on the stage of real history, that is salvific. In espousing that the Son of God suffered as God and that the Father suffered in union with His divine Son, contemporary theologians have reduced the passion and death of Jesus to a myth. What is taking place in history is but the mythical ahistorical expression of what is more importantly taking place within the Trinity itself. The overcoming of sin and the human suffering it causes is replaced by the more important concern of the Father and the Son extricating themselves from the suffering they have now experienced. While these theologians hold that the Father suffered in solidarity with His Son, there is no biblical warrant for this view. Rather, the Father, while not condoning the execution of His Son, is well pleased that His Son, in faithful obedience, would willingly offer His human life to the Father out of love for humankind.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Third, the pleasure of the Father is witnessed in raising His Son gloriously from the dead. The bodily resurrection testifies that Jesus' offering of His human life was salvific, and thus that the human suffering and death He bore were of the utmost importance. To place the significance of the Son's suffering within His divine nature is to relegate His human suffering and death to insignificance, and thus to relegate all human suffering to insignificance. The fully human resurrection of Jesus not only authenticates the reality and even importance of human suffering, it equally ensures that sin and death and the suffering these cause have been vanquished. The suffering and death of the Son incarnate is the Father's answer to human suffering.

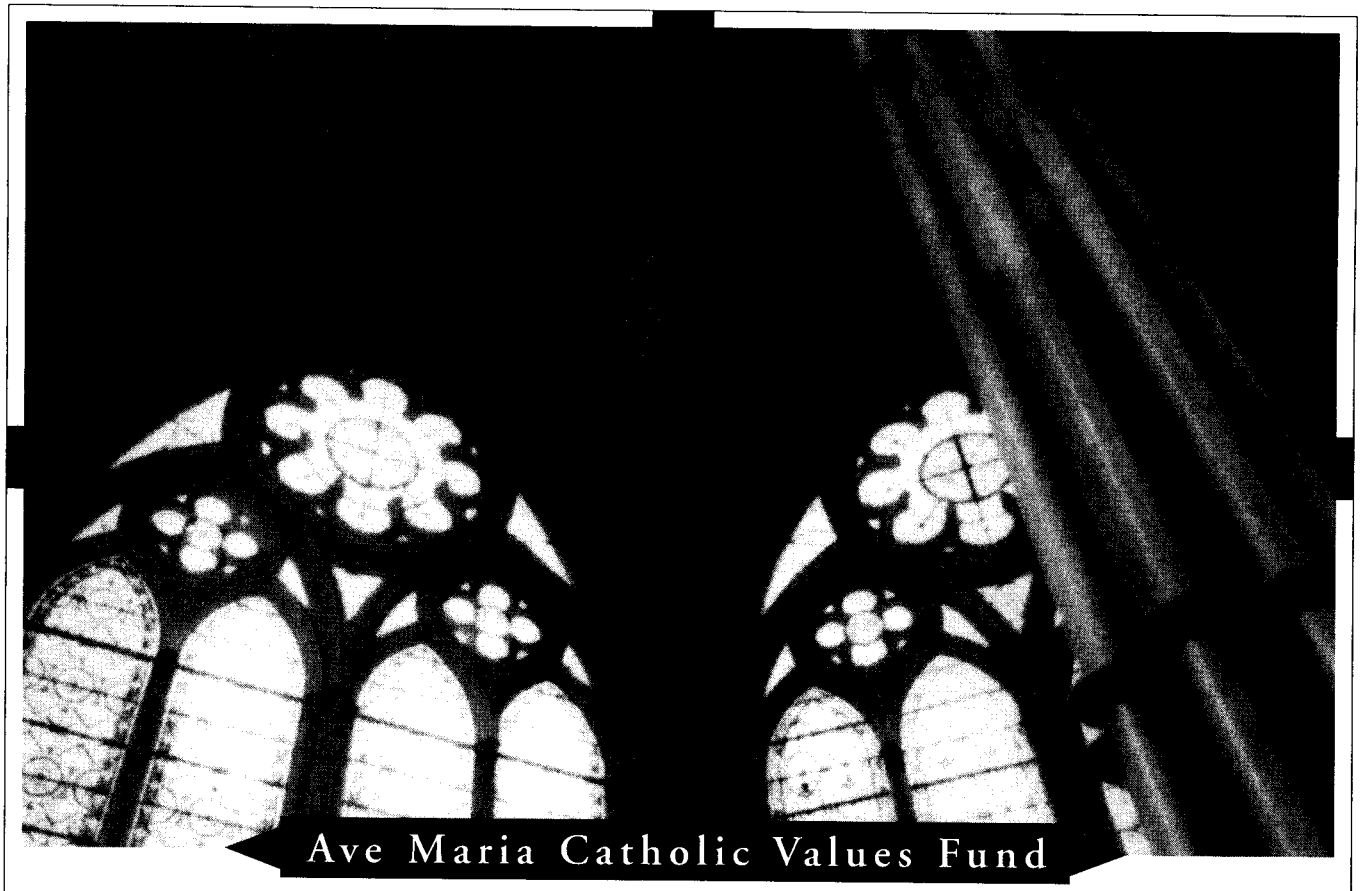
Fourth, human suffering can rightly be interpreted only within the light of Christ as head of His body, and so within an ecclesial context. Those who come to faith and are baptized into the risen Lord Jesus are united to Him and so are confident, through the Spirit that dwells within them, that they, in the midst of their suffering, already share in His resurrection. Thus, they anticipate their own resurrection upon the return of Jesus in glory when He will right every evil and wipe away every tear. Moreover, as members of Christ's body, the Church, Christians find support within that entire body—the Saints in heaven and the saints on earth.

This ecclesial confidence, as a member of the risen Lord Jesus' body, is completely absent within a theology of a suffering God. There one is merely "consoled," in the midst of one's own isolated suffering, by God's co-suffering. Such consolation not only does not meet the test of its own meaning, it further gives the impression that all men and women, regardless of their religious affiliation, experience such consolation. This undermines entirely Jesus' evangelistic summons to proclaim the good news to all the world, for there is now no need to do so, since whatever consolation there is to be had in the midst of suffering can be had apart from Christ. It is no longer Jesus who is the Father's answer to evil and the suffering it causes and in whom one finds consolation and hope; hope is merely lodged in some generic suffering being called God. While Christians, in their acts of compassion and love, are able to bring non-Christians within the orbit of Christ's own consolation and love, non-Christians can fully participate in and so fully experience Christ's compassion and love only if they themselves become Christians.

Finally, Christians not only experience and interpret all their various forms of suffering in the light of Jesus their risen head, but they also realize that He too, as their head, continues to suffer with them, His body. Some of the Fathers, such as Origen and Augustine, basing themselves upon the New Testament, and especially Jesus' declaration that Paul was persecuting him, argued that when Christians suffer, either because of their own sin or the sin that is committed against them, it is properly attributed to Jesus as their head. In a real way it is not Christ who shares in the present sufferings of Christians, it is Christians who share in the present sufferings of Christ and so in their own flesh "complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions" (Colossians 1:24). While Christ has completed the work of salvation, the suffering of righteous men and women continues to be the sufferings of Christ who is the head of the body, and thus their sufferings are in completion of or the filling up of Christ's present sufferings. But this suffering is the consolation and the glory of Christians. "For if we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too" (2 Corinthians 1:5). Equally, "we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him" (Romans 8:17).

I have attempted briefly to argue that God is impassible and so does not suffer. In the Church's most important public task of communicating the gospel, speaking of the God who does not suffer as we suffer may go against the cultural grain, but such is the God of Scripture and normative Christian tradition. As I have tried to show, the truth that God does not suffer is at the heart of the gospel, making it truly good news. This is especially in contrast to the bad news, which has become something like a "new orthodoxy," that God is in as much trouble as we are. We may intellectually grapple with the mystery of God in the midst of our suffering. However, in the end, it is only in becoming saints, especially in becoming martyrs, that we begin, in the midst of our own sufferings, most fully to fathom and most ardently to desire the perfect love of the all good and just Father made manifest in Jesus Christ. FT

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED



SEARCHING FOR AN INVESTMENT THAT SHARES YOUR VALUES?

Wise investors are selective because they recognize the impact of investment choices on the lives of those around them. If your goal, as a person of faith, is to have your investments reflect your spiritual values, consider the Ave Maria Catholic Values Fund. It is a mutual fund specifically tailored for individuals whose goal is to earn a superior return while investing in companies that do not violate the core values of the Roman Catholic Church.

For more information call toll-free
1-866-AVE-MARIA (1-866-283-6274)
or visit **www.avemariafund.com**

AVE MARIA CATHOLIC VALUES FUND

FINALLY. A VALUE FUND WITH VALUES.

For more complete information about the Ave Maria Catholic Values Fund, including charges and expenses, obtain a prospectus by calling toll-free 1-866-AVE-MARIA (1-866-283-6274). Please read the prospectus carefully before you invest or send money. Distributed by Gregory J. Schwartz & Co., Inc.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Books In Review

Matter, Life, and Soul

The Quantum Brain: The Search for Freedom and the Next Generation of Man. By Jeffrey Satinover. *Wiley. 276 pp. $24.95.*

***Reviewed by* Stephen M. Barr**

Jeffrey Satinover has written an audacious book. He believes that he has found, in two great breakthrough ideas, the keys to understanding the human mind. He is not the originator of these ideas, which are the result of the work of many researchers in neuroscience, computer science, and physics; he is their herald. Although a psychoanalyst by profession, he writes with an impressive level of knowledge and sophistication about all of these highly technical disciplines.

The first of the two key ideas of *The Quantum Brain* is "bottom-up computation." In the book's first half, Satinover guides the reader through the penetralia of that field: neural networks, spin glasses, Hopfield nets, cellular automata, Belousov-Zhabotinsky reactions, and much, much more. The nontechnically inclined should be prepared for some hard spelunking; but these are fascinating ideas, and worth the effort.

Satinover believes that in this part of the book he has succeeded in exposing the general principles on which the human brain is built. He is convinced that artificial thinking machines based on these principles are just around the corner and will far outstrip human mental powers. He likes to think, he says, that these artificial superbrains will "in their kindness . . . be willing to keep us [around]—flawed racehorses turned out to pasture." With this view, of course, goes the idea that we ourselves are machines. "Looking back at the territory we've covered," he says near the end of the book's first part, "we . . . arrive at the following conclusion: Man is a machine." And yet he finds this idea disquieting. He doesn't mind being a machine, even an obsolete machine, but he does not want to be *just* a machine. He wants to have some semblance of free will. He wants at least to keep that shred of dignity. This is where the second key idea of the book, "quantum indeterminacy," comes into play. Quantum theory, Satinover suggests, will rescue us from mere mechanism.

As he is aware, the problem of mechanism did not begin with the modern computer. It began with Newton. The great problem that Newton left philosophers was to reconcile human freedom with the rigid determinism of physical law. With the advent of quantum theory—which showed that the laws of physics predict only the probabilities of future events—many philosophers and physicists have come to think that such a reconciliation might be possible. I am inclined to believe that they are right.

However, there are several difficulties with the idea that quantum indeterminacy provides an opening for free will. The most formidable is the fact that quantum indeterminacy usually only plays a significant role in events at the atomic scale, whereas neurons, generally thought to be the basic building blocks of the brain, are a great deal larger. Consequently, neurons should behave in a "classical" or Newtonian manner. The quantum indeterminacy should get averaged away, washed out. It is this well-known argument that Satinover attempts to overcome in the second half of his book. He uses various facts about the internal structure of neurons and chaos theory to argue that quantum indeterminacy on the subcellular level can get amplified, rather than washed out, at the macroscopic level.

Quantum indeterminacy, of course, *can* have noticeable effects at the macroscopic level; otherwise, we couldn't know that it exists. The reason that physicists can see quantum indeterminacy in action is that they are able to build special devices, such as Geiger counters, that amplify the effects of quantum indeterminacy at atomic scales to produce results that they can observe with their (macroscopic) sense organs—audible clicks, for example. Satinover uses this fact to construct a very ingenious and highly original argument that quantum indeterminacy *must* play a role in the workings of the human brain.

His argument goes like this. The only examples in nature (he thinks) of "quantum amplification" to the macroscopic level occur in laboratory situations, which are after all contrived and brought about by human brains. Therefore, one may say that human brains do quantum amplification. Or, to put it another way, human brains are quantum amplifiers. Q.E.D. This is such an ingenious argument that it is a pity to have to point out that it is totally fallacious. A brain may make use of telephones, say, without *being* a telephone. A brain may build devices that employ the principle of the lever, or the principle of the laser, without its own *internal* workings depending on those principles. So, too, with quantum indeterminacy.

It is not clear why Satinover feels that he has to resort to such legerdemain, when much more solid arguments are available. Why not simply start with the evident fact of free will? Since free will requires a breakdown of physical determinism, and quantum theory gives us just such a breakdown, one would seem to have grounds enough for suspecting a role for quantum theory in explaining the

Stephen M. Barr *is a theoretical particle physicist at the Bartol Research Institute of the University of Delaware.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

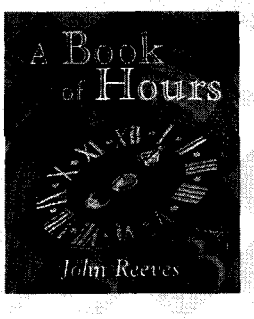
human mind. The reason Satinover does not argue in this fashion seems to be that he is not quite sure that we do have free will. The only freedom he is sure exists is the "freedom" of quantum systems. In Satinover's view atoms are definitely "free," but it remains to be seen whether we are. (His understanding of freedom is evidently not the traditional one, according to which only rational beings can be free.) He believes that if people succeed in building artificial "quantum computers" that can think, it would "open the possibility that nature has likewise learned how to employ quantum effects in our own evolution . . . [and that we] no longer need consider ourselves mere machines but rather creatures who . . . embody . . . some of the freedom that quantum systems alone appear to possess."

In fact, it appears that Satinover is not quite sure that human beings are even conscious: "Unlike lightning, say, consciousness cannot even be shown to exist." How strange. Satinover is a psychiatrist, so I presume that he believes in the existence of the Unconscious. It is the existence of the Conscious he appears to doubt. I suppose that (reversing the famous "Turing test") he will come to believe in his own consciousness (and free will) only when some computer of the future interrogates him and certifies them to be genuine.

Will we ever build machines that are smarter than we, as Satinover believes? The fundamental question is not one of technology or resources. It has to do with whether any machine that was only a machine, quantum or otherwise, could ever really have "mind" in the sense that we do. As we have seen, Satinover "arrive[s] at the . . . conclusion" that man is a machine. However, he does not arrive at it by way of any argument. Nowhere in his book is a single word of argumentation to be found for or against the proposition that man is a machine. There is plenty of discussion about the brain. But none of it touches the central question: Is the human mind explicable just in terms of the brain?

BUT EVEN LEAVING aside this all-important issue, the brain builders of the twenty-first century must still face another huge question: What kind of machine *is* the human brain? For decades the prevailing view in cognitive science and artificial intelligence was that our brains work somewhat in the manner of the conventional Turing type of computer, which uses programs. Satinover,

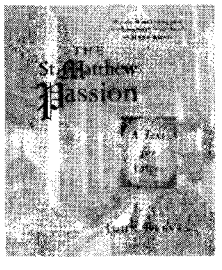
A Book of Hours
John Reeves



This inspiring book by author and composer John Reeves invites readers into a rich but neglected devotional tradition. Following the style of the exquisite, medieval prayer books called Books of Hours, Reeves here offers a cycle of spirit-nourishing poems about the life of Christ.

While purposely reflecting the design of ancient prayer books, *A Book of Hours* speaks directly to life in the modern world. Reeves is a contemporary poet writing in the language of our own time. His stirring poems speak of Christianity as a current reality — not just a legacy from the past — powerfully connecting the abiding message of the gospel with the challenges of faith today.

ISBN 0-8028-4907-5 · $16.00



Also by John Reeves

THE ST. MATTHEW PASSION
A Text for Voices

"Reeves' meditations disclose a new access not only into Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* but also behind it to the Passion of Jesus of Nazareth, in which we can discover the suffering of all humans through the ages. A profound and inspiring piece of religious poetry for our times."
— HANS KÜNG

ISBN 0-8028-3900-2 · $16.00

At your bookstore,
or call 800-253-7521
Fax: 616-459-6540
www.eerdmans.com

1071 WM. B. EERDMANS PUBLISHING CO.
255 JEFFERSON AVE. S.E. / GRAND RAPIDS, MI 49503

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

however, rejects this "top-down" model of the brain in favor of a "bottom-up" model based on "neural networks." A neural network is a system of nodes and connections that begins in a quite undifferentiated state—a tabula rasa—but which "learns by doing" its appointed task. Through a training process involving trial and error—in which those "neural" connections that are involved in successful trials are strengthened, while those involved in failures are weakened—the network evolves, adapts, and takes on definite shape. Since no one "programs" the network, by the time it is fully trained no one can really tell how it works.

Satinover likes the idea that the human brain spontaneously self-organizes like this, and that intelligence (and will, if we have it) wells up from below, from the undirected local interactions of matter. It has a pleasant Darwinian feel. Moreover, since no one knows how the human brain does most of what it does, such bottom-up evolutionary methods seem like the best bet for artificially making human-like or even superhuman brains. However, there is more to the human mind than Satinover seems to appreciate.

It is true that a lot of the things we pick up from experience, such as riding a bicycle or recognizing someone's voice, we seem to learn in the manner of a neural network. In the end, we can do the thing, but can't explain how, and certainly can't boil it down to a set of instructions or a "program." But there are also a lot of things that we do according to quite definite procedures, rules, and methods that are easily formulated, such as logical reasoning, putting together grammatical sentences, doing long division, filling out tax forms, and playing games of chess. At these things computer programs are vastly superior to neural networks.

Of course, viewing the human mind as merely a conventional Turing kind of computer is also grossly inadequate. There are many things the human mind can do that computer programs fail miserably at. An important example is the human capacity for global or "abductive" thinking. Humans can understand context, relevance, and significance—in other words, we can see the big picture. In his recent book *The Mind Doesn't Work That Way*, the eminent cognitive scientist Jerry Fodor observes that "the failure of artificial intelligence to produce successful simulations of routine commonsense cognitive competences is notorious, not to say scandalous. We still don't have the fabled machine that can make breakfast without burning down the house." He notes that many have suggested neural networks as the answer, but argues convincingly that they are not. "[Neural networks] notoriously can't do what Turing architectures can, namely, provide a plausible account of the causal consequences of logical form. But they also can't do what Turing architectures can't, namely provide a plausible account of abductive inference. It must be the sheer magnitude of their incompetence that makes them so popular."

What then *is* the answer to the abductive thinking riddle? In Fodor's view, "Nobody has the slightest idea." "Personally, he writes, "I am not inclined to celebrate how much we have learned about how our minds work. . . . The current situation in cognitive science is light years from being satisfactory. Perhaps somebody will fix it eventually; but not, I should think, in the foreseeable future, and not with the tools we currently have in hand."

There is a great deal in Dr. Satinover's book that I think wrong, implausible, or unpersuasive. However, he is dealing with deep and perhaps humanly insoluble puzzles. That he does not have all the answers, and that many of the answers he does have

LOOME THEOLOGICAL BOOKSELLERS

is pleased to announce the opening of a sister store, Loome Antiquarian Booksellers, on Saturday March 3rd, 2001. Loome Antiquarian will be among the largest scholarly secondhand bookshops in the United States, with outstanding collections in literature and literary criticism, history, children's literature, cookery, natural history, science, mathematics, military history, Judaica, music, art, fine bindings and a breathtaking array of prints, engravings, and leaves of mediaeval manuscripts.

Loome Antiquarian Booksellers
201 South Main Street
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-430-9805
Fax: 651-275-3888
Email: Loomebooks@aol.com
Website: www.Loomebooks.com

Please contact us either at our new store or at our long established:

Loome Theological Booksellers
320 North Fourth Street
Stillwater, MN 55082
Phone: 651-430-1092
Fax: 651-439-8504
Email: Loomebooks@aol.com
Website: www.Loomebooks.com

As always, we will travel anywhere to purchase good books. We hope to hear from you soon.

LOOME ANTIQUARIAN BOOKSELLERS

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

are wrong, is only to be expected. And yet on one issue of great importance I think that he is right and most of the experts wrong. I, too, believe that quantum theory has something profound to tell us about the human mind and the problem of free will. So also thought Herrmann Weyl, one of the great mathematicians and physicists of the twentieth century, who wrote in 1931:

> We may say that there exists a world, causally closed and determined by precise laws, but . . . the new insight which modern [quantum] physics affords opens several ways of reconciling personal freedom with natural law. It would be premature, however, to propose a definite and complete solution of this problem. One of the great differences between the scientist and the impatient philosopher is that the scientist bides his time. We must await the further development of science, perhaps for centuries, perhaps for thousands of years, before we can design a true and detailed picture of the interwoven texture of Matter, Life, and Soul. But the old classical determinism of Hobbes and Laplace need not oppress us longer.

ASSUMPTION COLLEGE THEOLOGY

Assumption College seeks a senior theologian and good administrator for a teaching position in Theology and an initial three-year term as Department Chair. The department, currently staffed by six full-time and several adjunct professors, offers undergraduate major and enjoys a privileged status, along with the Philosophy Department, in constituting the core of Assumption's liberal arts science curriculum. Candidates must demonstrate leadership in promoting the Catholic and ecumenical mission of the College to help its students acquire a love for the truth as the integrating principle of their studies. Applicants should have been tenured previously for at least ten years, hold the rank of full professor, and have achieved a notable publishing record in order to qualify for tenure and full professorship at Assumption College. The area of specialization is open.

The deadline for applications is November 1, 2001. Send a letter of application, *curriculum vitae* and three letters of recommendations to:

Rev. Roger. R. Corriveau, A.A.
Acting Chair, Theology Department
Assumption College
500 Salisbury St.
Worcester, MA 01609-1296

Assumption College encourages applications from candidates of diverse cultural background. EOE.

LEARN. ACHIEVE. CONTRIBUTE.

Unorthodoxy in Massachusetts

TRANSGRESSING THE BOUNDS: SUBVERSIVE ENTERPRISES AMONG THE PURITAN ELITE IN MASSACHUSETTS, 1630-1692. By LOUISE A. BREEN. *Oxford University Press. 292 pp. $45.*

***Reviewed by* George McKenna**

HISTORIAN PERRY MILLER began his monumental reexamination of American Puritan thought with *Orthodoxy in Massachusetts* (1933). In patient labor over the next thirty years, Miller sketched out the lineaments of the uniquely configured Protestantism that shaped what he called "the New England mind."

Since Miller's death in 1963, his vision of this single New England orthodoxy has come under increasing criticism. Literature professor Janice Knight went so far as to title her 1994 book *Orthodoxies in Massachusetts* to underscore her point that there were competing orthodoxies within the leadership structure of the Massachusetts Bay Colony. According to Knight and other recent students of American Puritanism, only after the "antinomian" crisis and the expulsion of Anne Hutchinson and her followers in 1638 did one version triumph, and even then, a quasi-antinomian variant lived on as a kind of underground theology.

Now, in *Transgressing the Bounds*, Louise A. Breen, who teaches history at Kansas State University, pushes the "diversity" thesis still further, surveying a variety of challengers to orthodoxy in seventeenth-century Massachusetts. Some, notably the antinomians, were theologically unorthodox; their obsession with personal "conversion" led them to question whether the "visible saints" governing the colony were truly saintly. But even among the theologically orthodox, Breen contends, there were plenty of mavericks. There was the New England Artillery Company, a private military organization of prominent Bostonians, which lobbied for greater toleration. There was the Puritan evangelist Daniel Gookin, who tried to "Christianize" and befriend the colony's Indians when just about everyone else wanted them to disappear. There were greedy merchants like Robert Keayne, who was fined by the Massachusetts General Court and admonished by the church for "selling his wares at excessive rates." Indeed, Breen contends, all those who ventured beyond the geographical limits of the colony, whether by trafficking with Indians and Frenchmen at one end of the colony or engaging in transatlantic trade at the other, were to some degree "subversive" of the existing order.

That the activities of all these groups and individuals contradicted, to one degree or another, the Puritan ideal of a "cohesive godly community" is certainly true. But this is hardly news; historians have been chronicling these contradictions for a long time. Breen, however, tries to go beyond rehashing their stories. What she seems to be aiming at is a general theory of subversion that will hold them all together. The key, she thinks, is antinomianism.

GEORGE MCKENNA *is Professor of Political Science at City College of New York and author of* The Drama of Democracy.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Before examining Breen's use of "antinomian," we need to keep in mind its meaning in colonial New England. Antinomianism was a form of hyper-Puritanism, carrying to extreme lengths the Reformation doctrine that we are saved not by human "works" but by God's "free grace." God grants grace to some people and withholds it from others, and there is nothing anyone can do to earn it. After receiving grace, the person's whole life changes—the former reprobate is now full of zeal to do God's will. In Reformation language, conversion is "justification," and the effect it produces on the individual is "sanctification." But the causality goes only one way: justification produces sanctification, but a person cannot, simply by acting piously and charitably, find justification.

No Puritan would dispute any of this, but mainstream Puritanism in America tended to leave some room for human endeavor. We might not be able to earn grace, but we can at least extend our hands to receive it. Less metaphorically: we can prepare ourselves (by prayer, Scripture reading, humbling our hearts, and so on) to receive this unearned gift. Furthermore, while sanctification must always follow, not precede, justification, a person's sanctified bearing—his outward appearance—can be used as evidence that he has undergone a true conversion.

All of this was connected to political legitimacy. To hold office or even vote in colony-wide elections you had to be a church member. And to become a church member you had to convince the congregation that you had undergone a real conversion. Political power in seventeenth-century Massachusetts thus rested, finally, on the authenticity of an inward experience. The fragility of this foundation became evident when Anne Hutchinson and other members of the Boston congregation began to question the spiritual credentials of church leaders (and, at least implicitly, the political establishment). They charged that, with very few exceptions, the ministers were "walking legally," were led only by religious law, and had not undergone an inner conversion. The charge came very close to saying that most of the colony's religious leaders were frauds. Not content to voice these views in their own Boston church, the antinomians journeyed to other towns and heckled ministers during their sermons.

In 1637 the political establishment struck back. Anne Hutchinson was brought to trial before the General Court and charged with sedition. In a dramatic confrontation, Hutchinson told her accusers that she was inspired by a direct revelation from God and threatened that "if you go on in this course you begin you will bring a curse upon you and your posterity, and the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it." In 1638 she and the other ringleaders were expelled from the colony, and the others recanted.

To make antinomianism the key to understanding all the other "subversive enterprises" in the colony, Breen takes considerable liberties with the term. "Antinomianism," for her, stands for more than a set of heretical opinions; it becomes an open-ended critique of the "New England Way." This permits her to argue that all the seemingly different challengers to orthodoxy were quasi-antinomian, even if they "were not necessarily antinomian in a theological sense." They were connected to the antinomians because they spoke in a "language of protest" like the antinomians, or because they gave "varying degrees of support" to antinomian dissenters, or because what they said "paralleled" antinomianism, or simply because antinomianism "resonated" with them. Instead of telling us what it was that bound together all these

On October 31, 2000, Pope John Paul II proclaimed Thomas More the patron saint of statesmen and politicians,
adding to More's position as patron of lawyers.
Already distinguished in his own times as a man of great learning, wit, and faith, he was martyred over a point of law.
His life may be viewed as an example of the unity of faith and reason. Yet from the perspective of those around him, including his family, More's actions seemed anything but reasonable, prudent, or wise; in fact, his death seemed more like folly . . .

The Thomas More College of Liberal Arts
MERRIMACK, NH ◆ ROME, ITALY
Please contact the College for details on the essay and the four-year, half-tuition scholarships.
www.thomasmorecollege.edu 603-880-8308
admissions@thomasmorecollege.edu

Faith and Reason Scholarship Essay Contest

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seemingly different challenges to orthodoxy, she resorts to analogies—comparing, for example, capitalist merchants and antinomian mystics because the merchants' "free trade" was something like the antinomians' "free grace," because it was a "mysterious, unsystematized, and cosmopolitan mercantile ethos that resisted world control of local authorities." This seems strained, to say the least.

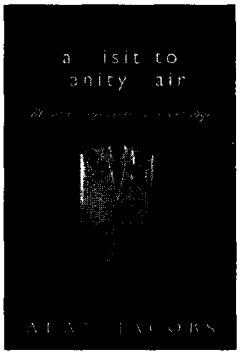
Breen may have overreached in her attempt to tie antinomianism to other "subversive enterprises," but she makes a good case that antinomianism was subversive enough by itself. At the heart of antinomianism was its subjectivism, its insistence that the community's estimation of a person is useless, even deceptive, because the person could be a hypocrite. This had enormous consequences. In his famous speech written aboard the *Arbella*, the flagship of the Puritans' fleet in 1630, the soon-to-be-governor John Winthrop announced the founding of a new community that was to be knit together by Christian love. Six years later the antinomians were charging that the community was knit together by deception. As Breen perceives, this was politically disastrous. "If outward appearances were as deceiving as the antinomians suggested, then the godly community could be little more than a pleasant fiction with no basis in reality."

THESE WERE DOCTRINES not of socially marginal elements but of very respectable people in the colony. Indeed, the doctrines of John Cotton, one of the colony's leading theologians, came very close to antinomianism, close enough to prompt Anne Hutchinson to call him as a witness on her behalf. (Cotton was one of the two ministers Hutchinson exempted from her charge of "walking legally.") Cotton, Breen notes, "denounced all mere outward sanctification as 'counterfeit treasure' and argued that anyone who based [his] assurance on such appearances alone—rather than the direct witness of Christ—was a 'hypocrite' who deserved to be 'blamed of going aside to a Covenant of Works.'" Cotton's severe judgment came not from the application of any community norms but from his own mystical intuitions. It is here, I think, that Breen shows considerable insight.

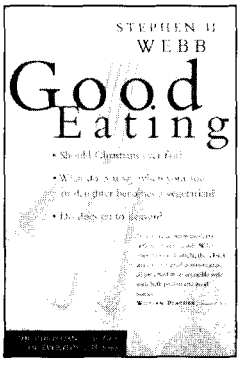
Historians have tended to focus on the "soft" side of Cotton, his tender mysticism of Christian love; critics at the time considered him too "free and easie." Breen wants us to consider another possibility: that his salvation doctrine "was too harsh and dispiriting for the average colonist."

Cultural Criticism
As If God Mattered

■ **Growing Pains**
Randall Balmer
1-58743-018-5 • 144 pp. • $15.99c
"A moving, inspiring, and extraordinary book. . . . I commend Growing Pains to everyone on the journey to a meaningful faith grounded in the love and grace of God."
—Jim Wallis, *Sojourners* magazine



■ **A Visit to Vanity Fair**
Alan Jacobs
1-58743-014-2 • 176 pp. • $18.99c
"Alan Jacobs is, quite simply, one of our most discerning cultural critics. He writes with a flair and elegance, combined with vibrant faith, that makes his essays an instructive delight. This is an important book."
—Richard John Neuhaus, *First Things*



■ **Good Eating**
Stephen Webb
1-58743-015-0 • 272 pp. • $21.99p
"Don't dismiss Stephen Webb's *Good Eating* before you've digested it fully. Webb makes cogent comments about American Christians' obsession with food (which he calls, quite rightly, and idol) and proposes a moderate diet of 'Christian vegetarianism' to reflect the anticipated, perfect kingdom of God. . . . It is, in all, a superb and meaty argument."
—*Publishers Weekly*

the tradition alive
At your bookstore or call 1-800-877-2665
Brazos Press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It was orthodoxy, not antinomianism, that was responsive to the sensibilities of ordinary people. "The orthodox premise that the seen and the unseen world were commensurable accorded well with the common sense of ordinary settlers." The antinomians turned this common sense upside down by suggesting that the community's spiritual leaders—people who lived blameless lives, many of them showing exemplary kindness and charity—might really be reprobates. Can anyone blame the majority for regarding antinomianism as a subversive doctrine? Left alone, it would have destroyed what Winthrop called the "ligaments" of the society, the mutual love and trust of its members.

But whose fault, ultimately, was that? Was it the fault of antinomianism, for pushing the Puritan doctrine of "free grace" to the edge of solipsism and anarchy? Or was it the fault of the orthodox Puritans themselves, for embracing a doctrine that could so easily lead mystics like Anne Hutchinson into solipsism? Or can we push back the indictment still further? If antinomianism was hyper-Puritanism, what was Puritanism but hyper-Protestantism? As Perry Miller observed, "Protestantism liberated men from the treadmill of indulgences and penances, but cast them on the iron couch of introspection."

But we needn't go that far. The issue was not Protestantism but the political uses of a certain kind of Protestantism. To found a political regime on something as ineffable as a conversion experience is virtually to invite antinomian challenges. And what to do then? Tolerate them, let them destroy the ligaments of the community, or suppress them? The Puritans chose suppression, but they never quite suppressed the doubts raised by Anne Hutchinson and her supporters.

What happened after that is still a matter of dispute. Did the Puritan commonwealth finally succumb to the forces of individualism and secularism? Or did it absorb and contain those forces, adapting itself to change without losing its essentially religious essence? Breen rejects the "declension" model because she insists that the subversive forces were there from the beginning. But if so, what caused the changes? And how did Puritanism evolve? She only hints at this, but the suggestion seems to be that some of the leading Puritan apologists tried to resolve the doubts left by the antinomians by shifting the locus of justification from the individual to the community—creating, as it were, a kind of collective antinomianism. She quotes one influential writer who went to the length of decrying preparation for war; it was unnecessary and presumptuous, he said, because God guides "every bullet that is shot at you." An intriguing thought, and not without irony: orthodox Puritans finally admitted that many of the "visible saints" guiding their community might be reprobates, but then insisted that the community itself was assured of salvation. Somehow it sounds very American.

The Dying of the Light?

Quality with Soul. By Robert Benne. *Eerdmans. 217 pp. $19.*

Religion on Campus. By Conrad Cherry, Betty A. DeBerg, and Amanda Porterfield. *University of North Carolina Press. 328 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by **Naomi Schaefer**

The nation's Roman Catholic bishops have recently approved procedures for certifying that theologians teaching Catholic theology at Catholic colleges do in fact teach Catholic theology. While the decision was decried by some as an assault on academic freedom, the bishops explained that they were only trying to stem the sort of widespread secularization of higher education that has affected Protestant schools. Though many observers had already recognized a secularizing trend in Catholic higher education, James

Naomi Schaefer, *a new contributor, is writing a book about religious higher education in America.*

The Lumen Christi Institute
and The Newman Institute, Sweden

present

Word and Image in Christian Prayer

A Symposium

Beauty: The Dangerous Way to God in Word and Image
Fr. Raymond Gawronski, SJ, Marquette University

Picturing Faith: Art in Christian Contexts
Dr. Britt-Inger Johansson, Newman Institute, Sweden

Word and Image in Christian Prayer: The Carmelite Tradition
Bishop Anders Arborelius, OCD, Stockholm, Sweden

9:00 AM to 4:30 PM, Saturday, November 3, 2001

Holy Name Cathedral Auditorium
735 North State Street, Chicago, Illinois

Register with The Lumen Christi Institute at 773-955-5887 or www.lumenchristi.org.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Tunstead Burtchaell's seminal 1998 book *The Dying of the Light* was the first work to thoroughly document the widespread loss of religious identity in America's Christian colleges and universities since the 1960s. Reporting not only on faculty members' dwindling sense of religious commitment, but also on administrators' laissez-faire attitude toward student behavior, and students' diminishing respect for religious authority and alarming lack of knowledge about their faith, Burtchaell issued a wake-up call to those interested in the future of Christian higher education.

Now, three years later, several observers are revisiting the issue. Robert Benne, a professor at Roanoke College, agrees with Burtchaell's fundamental premise. But in his new book, *Quality with Soul*, Benne presents what he believes to be the exceptions to Burtchaell's rule, describing six schools that in his view have "kept faith with their religious traditions." The schools he examines—Calvin, Wheaton, Valparaiso, Notre Dame, Baylor, and St. Olaf—have all managed to combine academic rigor with a seriously religious education both inside and outside the classroom.

BENNE IDENTIFIES several key administrative policies that can make or break a school's religious identity. Calvin College, for example, is supported by a network of "tightly knit and highly disciplined churches and a system of elementary and secondary schools." Both the financial and moral support of the founding church and a ready supply of students who strongly identify with the faith are important components in the fight against secularism, not least because they help to guarantee financial security, the lack of which, according to both Benne and Burtchaell, has been a factor in the secularization process. In order to compete with secular rivals, many religious institutions have built expensive campus facilities and devoted precious resources to attracting famous scholars with little to no commitment or loyalty to the school's religious identity.

Benne points out that once the religious commitment of a school's faculty wanes, it begins to lose its religious character. The issue is not restricted to religion or theology departments, the areas recently addressed by the Catholic bishops. Rather, Benne emphasizes the importance of the entire faculty's involvement in the integration of

LORD ACTON ESSAY COMPETITION

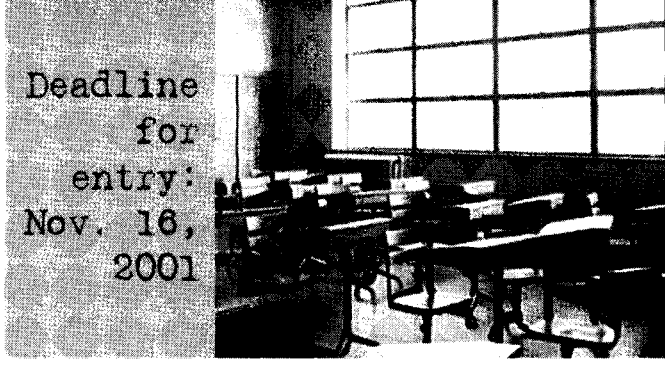
The Changing Relationship of Education and State: Promise or Peril?

Quotation on which to base your submission:

For Centuries it was never discovered that education was a function of the State, and the State never attempted to educate. But when modern absolutism arose, it laid claim to everything on behalf of the sovereign power.

-Lord Acton, "Essay on Irish Education"

Awards:
1st $2,000
2nd $1,000
3rd $500



Deadline for entry: Nov. 16, 2001

Send submissions to:
The Acton Institute Essay Competition
161 Ottawa NW, Suite 301
Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Phone: 800-345-2286
E-mail: awards@acton.org
For guidelines visit: www.acton.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

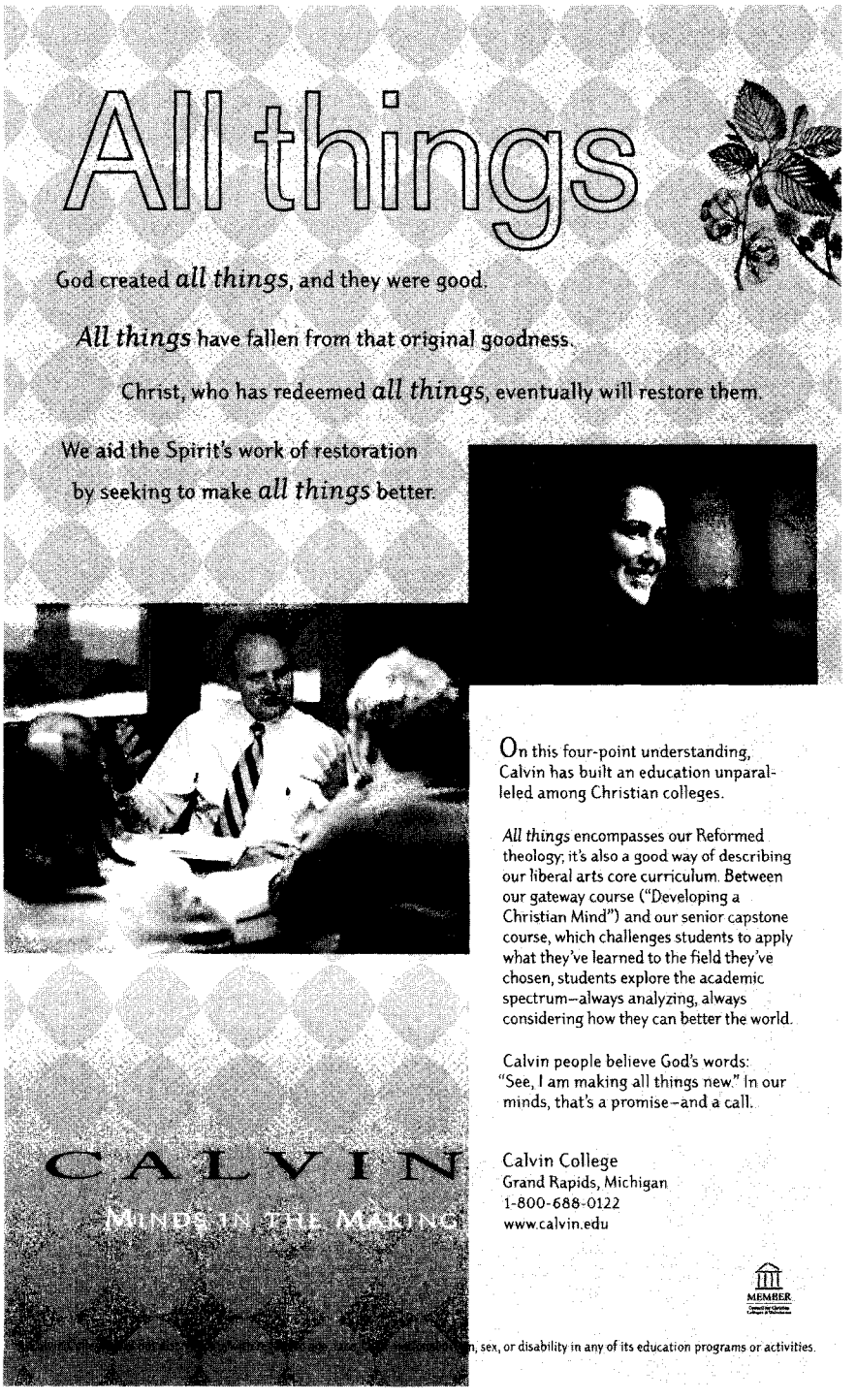
faith and knowledge. Wheaton College (an interdenominational Christian school in Illinois), for instance, requires all new professors to participate in a Faculty Seminar in Faith and Learning, which introduces them to the religious mission of the school. During their second year, faculty must attend a weekly seminar covering such topics as "The Biblical and Theological Foundations of the Christian Account" and "Christianity and the Liberal Arts."

Quality with Soul also details the importance of administrative involvement in student life. Benne praises the in loco parentis role of school authorities at Notre Dame, for instance, where dorms are segregated by sex and an extensive system of rectors enforces the university rules regarding alcohol use and visitation by members of the opposite sex.

While Benne offers numerous useful observations about how schools can maintain their religious identities, he goes a bit far in seeking to provide his readers with a "recipe for success." The result, unfortunately, is a certain amount of pseudoscientific oversimplification. For instance, his graph, on which such factors as "ethos" and "public rhetoric" are plotted against such categories as "orthodox" or "intentionally pluralistic," is not terribly illuminating.

Benne's largely theoretical work is complemented by another new book, *Religion on Campus*, which paints impressively detailed pictures of four colleges. Although the authors (Conrad Cherry, Betty A. DeBerg, and Amanda Porterfield, professors at Indiana University, the University of Northern Iowa, and the University of Wyoming, respectively) are academics, they have written a journalistic rather than an academic study. In an effort to explore whether secularization has, in fact, become the order of the day in higher education, the authors spent a few months at each of four schools, which are, somewhat oddly, given such nondescript aliases as South University and North College. They interviewed faculty, students, and administrators, and attended classes and meetings of campus religious organizations. The result is a colorful and useful portrait of the role of faith in the life of these schools.

The first school, a large western state university, is the only officially secular school discussed in the book. It has a plethora of religious organizations, including Catholic and Lutheran ministries and a Hillel Jewish student center. Each of the school's numerous religious groups


All things
God created all things, and they were good.
All things have fallen from that original goodness.
Christ, who has redeemed all things, eventually will restore them.
We aid the Spirit's work of restoration
by seeking to make all things better.
On this four-point understanding, Calvin has built an education unparalleled among Christian colleges.
All things encompasses our Reformed theology; it's also a good way of describing our liberal arts core curriculum. Between our gateway course ("Developing a Christian Mind") and our senior capstone course, which challenges students to apply what they've learned to the field they've chosen, students explore the academic spectrum—always analyzing, always considering how they can better the world.
Calvin people believe God's words: "See, I am making all things new." In our minds, that's a promise—and a call.
CALVIN
MINDS IN THE MAKING
Calvin College
Grand Rapids, Michigan
1-800-688-0122
www.calvin.edu
MEMBER
sex, or disability in any of its education programs or activities.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has enjoyed a certain amount of financial stability ever since the Supreme Court handed down its *Rosenberger* decision, which held that religious organizations had to be treated like any other student group when university funds are distributed. Nonetheless, the authors conclude that the "state of religion at WU may be summed up in economic terms as healthy supply and weak demand." Despite the best efforts of the school, whose administrators do not at all seem averse to religious activity on campus (group prayers, for instance, are permitted before athletic events, and the admissions office passes along names of applicants who report religious affiliation to the appropriate ministry), only about 10 percent of the student body is involved in organized religious activity on campus.

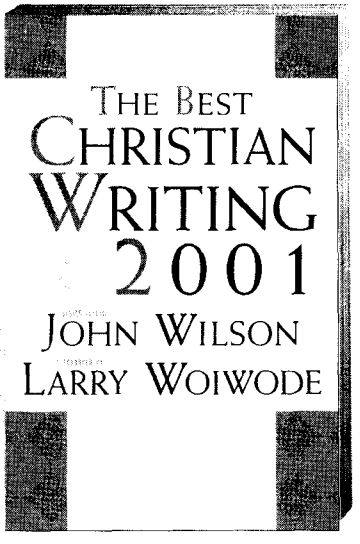
What is more interesting, the authors point out, is the kind of religion practiced by those students. Many religious organizations have submitted to student demands that they cut back on formal services in favor of support groups, retreats, and community service activities. At a certain point, it becomes hard to discern any distinctive religiosity in the activities. During a weekly meeting of the Wesley Foundation (a United Methodist group), students do take communion, but most of the meeting involves singing folk songs and chatting about the challenges of campus life. In answer to the leader's question "How can we keep the spark of God burning inside us this week?" the responses included "I'm a vegetarian and that's religious to me," "Smile," and "Take time to be quiet and alone." Another student who is active in the (Catholic) Newman Center, calls herself a "spiritual junky," citing as an example her experience of turning out the lights in the room with a male friend and listening to an Indigo Girls CD.

SPIRITUALITY, AS OPPOSED TO participation in organized religious rituals, is a major presence at the other schools the authors visit. At East University, a Catholic school, the university chaplain told the authors, "Catholicism comes across as being about rules and regulations. But undergraduates are at a time in life when they're not really interested in rules and regulations." So the school often goes outside the Catholic tradition to stimulate student spirituality. About 30 percent of the incoming freshmen participate in a two-day retreat modeled "on the idea of taking the Indian brave into the forest away from the tribe" in which students are taught to "recombine and reconceptualize the elements of their lives." Similarly, when the authors asked the student government president at South University, a historically African-American college, whether students were religious, he answered, "No, but most of them are very *spiritual*." While the students at South University, North College, and East University attend church to varying degrees, many of them talk about their "personal relationship with God" as largely separate from their religious community and particular denomination.

To their credit, students do use their religious groups to organize community service events. At East University, they volunteer at soup kitchens. At North College, they boast one of the highest numbers of graduates entering the Peace Corps. And at South University, students serve as counselors at a center for battered women.

But students don't really need campus ministers in order to accomplish community service, or to achieve what they regard as a personal relationship with God. As a result, the role of religious leaders on these campuses is unclear. At North College, the ministers make more of an

"Striking, Engaging, Brilliant..."*



This array of essays from contemporary Christian luminaries culls the riches of the Christian faith into a collection that is a must-read for every thoughtful Christian.

Contributors include:
Stephen Carter
Elizabeth Fox Genovese
Richard John Neuhaus
Reynolds Price
Erik Erikson
Alice McDermott
Virginia Stem Owens
Philip Yancey

* from the Introduction by Larry Woiwode

HarperSanFrancisco
A Division of HarperCollins*Publishers*
www.harpercollins.com

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

attempt to befriend the students than to serve in an authoritative capacity. There the authors attended a "Jello wrestling match" between the college pastor and the dean of students. While the event was organized to raise money for charity, the question of whether it was worth the demeaning activity seems not to have crossed anyone's mind.

And while students have little idea of what constitutes religious practice in their extracurricular lives, the attempt to teach religion in the classroom seems even more muddled. At the state school, the answer seems easy: teach about all religions but avoid presenting any one faith as superior to any other. But at East University (the Catholic school) the administration and faculty seem confused. On the one hand, although there are "numerous non-Catholics [among the faculty] representing a wide spectrum of religious belief," the consensus in the religion department seems to be that it extends "the presumption of truth to the Catholic religion." But, on the other hand, two-thirds of the students taking classes in the theology department reported that "their professor did not advocate any religious perspective." Some of the religion courses seem academically rigorous and religiously serious, but in another a student reported that during the first week back from Christmas break class time was devoted to "hugging each other and finding out how we were."

Although there is much concern among administrators and faculty members at the religious schools that professors will be too biased when teaching about Christianity, professors of other world religions (usually hired by the schools to instill diversity in the student body) do not have any qualms about proclaiming the truth of their religions. While Karen Cassidy, who teaches the History of Christianity at North College, calls herself "a historian whose topic happens to be religion," Sinad Banik tells his classes that he is a "Hindu scholar rather than simply a scholar of Hinduism."

While the commitment to teaching "religious diversity" is quite strong at the state school, the Lutheran college, and the Catholic university, it is not much of an issue at South University. And with the exception of one or two professors who organized "religious emphasis week" (during which representatives of other world religions were brought in for a few sparsely attended lectures) there seems to be remarkably little controversy about this. In some ways, the school's overwhelmingly African-American population gives it an advantage that other religious schools used to have. That is, the religiously homogeneous character of the student population permits faculty to teach Christianity in the classroom and encourage its practice on campus without the fear of offending many students. The authors describe the unself-conscious way that religion is still practiced at SU:

> One of the most remarkable features of religion on this campus was the manner in which virtually every public event became a worship service. Founders Day, freshman investiture, commencement, convocation, and the coronation of the homecoming queen were framed as orders of worship, included the presence of the chaplain, were saturated with religious music, and focused on religious messages. . . . The ethos was . . . decidedly shaped by public religious ritual.

While such rituals were once common at many American colleges, both secular and religious, Cherry and his coauthors clearly show that nowadays SU is the rare exception. Although they have added to Burtchaell's picture, they have not really contradicted it. While the authors report having "found little evidence that the strong tendencies toward religious freedom and religious pluralism led to any lack of religious vitality" in the campuses they visited, their account suggests otherwise: faculty and administrators are afraid to offend students by supporting religious "rules and regulations" or by teaching Christian doctrine. In its place, they substitute a mushier sort of "spirituality" and feel-good "togetherness." It is probably impossible to separate cause and effect, but on most American campuses today, as in the broader society, the vitality of religion as an intellectually serious and morally authoritative activity is not conspicuous.

Dordt College
Faculty Positions

Dordt College is seeking applications for openings beginning 2002-2003 in the following areas:

Communication

Education (Two positions)
Introduction, upper-level (elementary and secondary methods), special education

Foreign Language
Spanish

Physical Science-Astronomy-Earth Science

Social Work (Temporary position with possibility for regular appointment) Generalist: micro-practice background; methods courses & field practice

Theatre Arts
Theatre generalist

Theology
General education courses in biblical theology and upper level biblical studies courses

Evaluation of applications will continue until positions are filled. To learn more about a position and receive application materials, qualified persons committed to a Reformed biblical perspective and educational philosophy are encouraged to send a letter of interest and a curriculum vitae/resume to:

Dr. Rockne McCarthy
Vice President for Academic Affairs
Dordt College
498 4th Ave NE
Sioux Center, IA 51250-1697
Facsimile: 712-722-4496
E-mail: vpaa@dordt.edu
Web Site: www.dordt.edu/offices/acadaff

Dordt College encourages the nominations and candidacies of women, minorities, and persons with disabilities.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Is Religion Good for You?

HANDBOOK OF RELIGION AND HEALTH. By HAROLD G. KOENIG, MICHAEL E. MCCULLOUGH, and DAVID B. LARSON. *Oxford University Press. 712 pp. $65.*

***Reviewed by* Paul R. McHugh**

THE TRADITION OF the scientific handbook as a concise, accessible source of validated information emerged in the late nineteenth century when the factual burden of scientific and medical subjects began to overwhelm students. The *Handbook of Religion and Health* draws on that tradition and raises the presumption that useful information linking religion to health has grown to a degree calling for summation and evaluation.

The book is thorough, encompassing in the term "health" both mental and physical well-being, and in the term "religion" all that can be construed as an aspect of spirituality, both traditional, organized creeds and nontraditional, individualistic practices. It reviews the American periodical literature of the twentieth century for any scientific correlation—either positive or negative—between religion and health.

The book consists of eight parts that cover issues relating health to religion. A section briefly summarizing the history of religion, science, and medicine is followed by one discussing the debate as to religion's possible effects on health. These sections are then followed by three more that review contemporary research on mental health, physical disorders, and the use of health services in relation to religion. The book closes with three sections on recommendations for practice, future research, and references.

Among the references to contemporary scientific literature the authors note common failures of research design and provide "grades" to direct the interested reader towards published works that provide the best evidence linking health to religion. This book thus offers an up-to-date—through 2000—review of the periodical literature on this topic. The *Handbook* concludes with a chapter on needs and priorities for further research.

The authors report the consistent but not overpowering evidence that modest health benefits follow from religious commitment. While they are careful in their claims and note the need for more studies to confirm and extend these modest findings, the sheer bulk of the book (712 double-columned pages) leads one to expect somewhat more.

The authors, professors of psychiatry, psychology, and medicine at Duke and Southern Methodist University, readily admit that little rigorous scientific research has been done to demonstrate the effects of religious practice on health. Indeed, most of the beneficial findings they report are anecdotal or serendipitous. But even these discoveries are so modest that they hardly warrant further elaboration in methodical studies.

Above all, the authors wish to refute the suggestion that religious convictions may injure one's physical or mental health, a claim that has been made since Nietzsche referred to the religious European as "a herd animal . . . sickly and mediocre." The *Handbook* documents the views of several celebrated psychologists, including Sigmund Freud, who have seen religion as a kind of mental illness and thus harmful by definition. Most often it has been described as a form of obsessive compulsion or morbid anxiety. Anyone with knowledge of psychiatry and familiar with either obsessive compulsive disorder or morbid anxiety has to marvel at the glibness and lack of intellectual rigor that such claims displayed.

THE AUTHORS OF the *Handbook* diligently review these reports and rightly conclude that the evidence for the negative claims is scant and that the claims usually reflect the investigators' preconceptions and closed-mindedness. Actual injuries from

PAUL R. MCHUGH *is Psychiatrist-in-Chief at Johns Hopkins Hospital.*

THE INSTITUTE FOR THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SCIENCES

Institute for Psychological Sciences
offering a
Master of Science and Psy.D.
in
Clinical Psychology
Integrating the Psychological
Sciences with the Catholic view
Of the Human Person and Catholic Moral Teachings

For more information please call Sharon O'Donnell at 703-416-1441
Email: sodonnell@ipsciences.edu Fax: 703-416-8588
2001 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, Va. 22202
www.ipsciences.edu

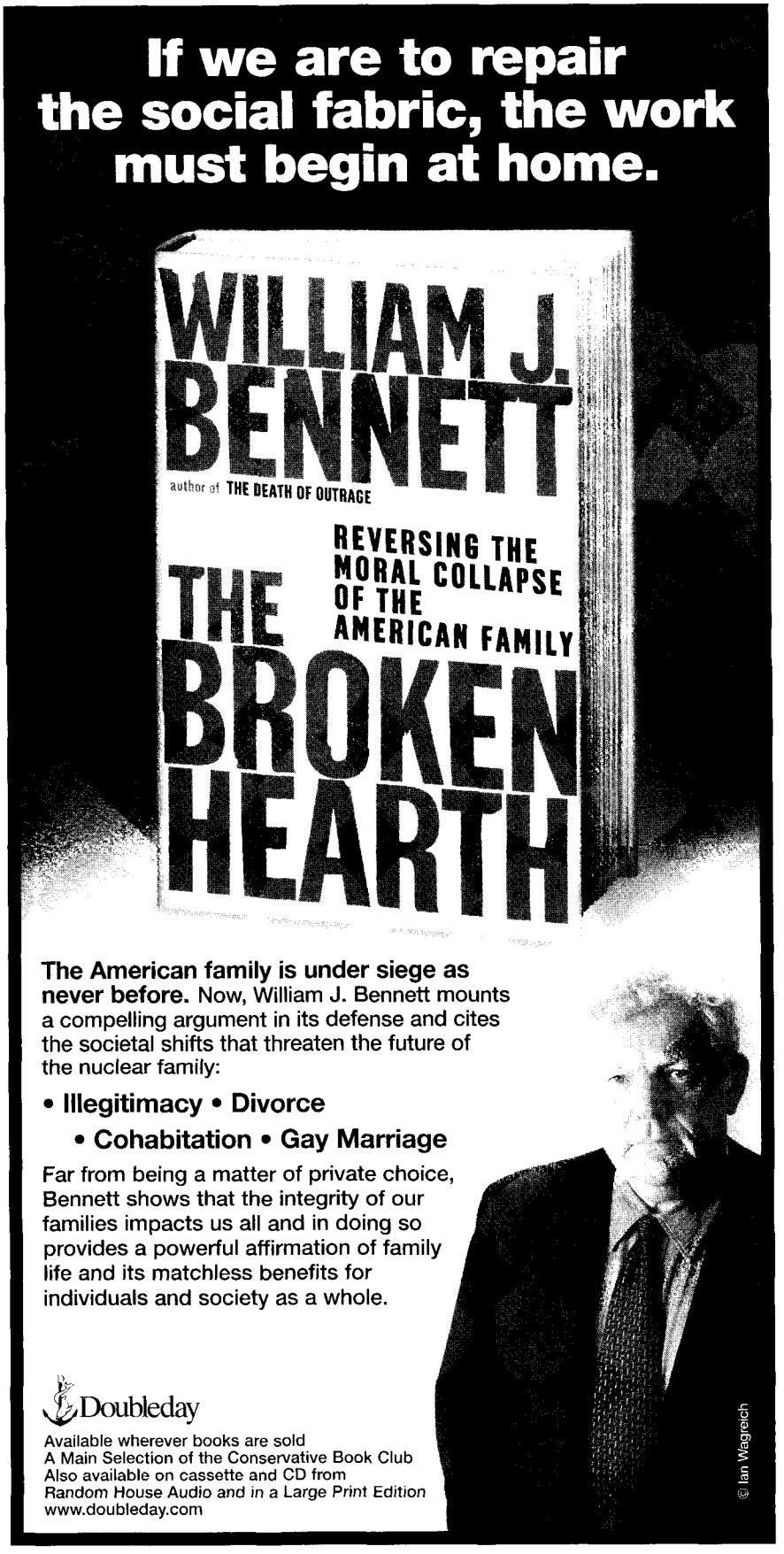
Financial Aid Available

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

religious conviction—aside from the deleterious consequences of avoiding essential medical treatment among followers of Christian Science and similar groups—are extremely rare. These negative claims and isolated reports, like most of the purported positive correlations, have not been demonstrated by hypothesis-generated research but by anecdotes needing more empirical confirmation.

Epidemiological research can easily refute the claim that religion produces ill health, but strong positive evidence is needed to conclude that religious practice directly causes good health. We might all agree that religious beliefs can lead a person to avoid excesses of wine, women, and song, and therefore exposure to many pathogens. But this is far from proving that good health—for example, the correlations reported in the *Handbook* between tiny reductions of diastolic blood pressure and religious practice—is a direct result of attending Sunday worship.

And yet, the authors are highly ambitious. They are riding a wave of interest in exploring how physical conditions, such as vulnerability to infection and persistence of chronic immunologic illness, may be tied to emotional states and environmental stressors. The disciplines of psychoneuroendocrinology and psychoimmunology have emerged from those studies. The authors of the *Handbook* attempt to press this research further, into the domain of religious life and observance. They claim that they have evidence to propose a "new way of practicing medicine that considers the body, mind, *and spirit*" (emphasis added). Indeed the book's Foreword promises a "new paradigm" for which this text will serve as a "definitive sourcebook." These grand claims and promises are, alas, not met and thus are clearly overstated given that the authors find such meager evidence of health benefits of religion in the more than 1,200 studies and 400 research


If we are to repair the social fabric, the work must begin at home.
WILLIAM J. BENNETT
author of THE DEATH OF OUTRAGE
REVERSING THE MORAL COLLAPSE OF THE AMERICAN FAMILY
THE BROKEN HEARTH
The American family is under siege as never before. Now, William J. Bennett mounts a compelling argument in its defense and cites the societal shifts that threaten the future of the nuclear family:
• Illegitimacy • Divorce
• Cohabitation • Gay Marriage
Far from being a matter of private choice, Bennett shows that the integrity of our families impacts us all and in doing so provides a powerful affirmation of family life and its matchless benefits for individuals and society as a whole.
Doubleday
Available wherever books are sold
A Main Selection of the Conservative Book Club
Also available on cassette and CD from Random House Audio and in a Large Print Edition
www.doubleday.com
© Ian Wagreich

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

reviews they examine. Even the most sympathetic reader of this book will be let down in the wake of these introductory claims.

Even more disappointing is the authors' posture towards religion itself. The *Handbook* simply does not take into account why people seek out a religion and what kind of effects religions and their advocates hope to promote in human life. After adolescence, when one might pray for clearer skin and curlier hair, most religious people do not expect their lives will be longer or freer of physical vicissitudes because they meditate on the teachings of the prophets or follow the way of the cross. Authentic religious piety rests on an apprehension of life's meaning and seeks a path to a less selfish, more generative maturity tied to that apprehension. Health, like wealth, may accompany religious devotion, but neither can be its aim. Not to put too fine a point on it: one doesn't go to church for the same reasons one goes to the gym.

THE MOST DISAGREEABLE aspect of the book is its scientism and medical materialism. The authors write in the desiccated tone of the social scientist who divorces his thought from the human encounter with the transcendent—which is, of course, an encounter on which their entire project depends. Nowhere in this tome does one find a statement of (let alone any enthusiastic support for) the authentic place of religion in our being—where it fits, what it claims, and what it adds. It is as though the authors believe that religion can best be accommodated within our materialist and consumerist culture by hinting that, like Vitamin C, it may protect us from the common cold.

Due to the anticipated retirement of its current Director, the *Christian Labour Association of Canada,* a trade union committed to justice in the workplace, is inviting persons with leadership skills to apply for the position of:

Executive Director

The successful team leader will serve from the Union's Toronto office, and offer visionary leadership to a current team of 90 colleagues working out of six regional offices in Ontario, Alberta and BC.

Applicants must be able to articulate their Christian faith and world view and have experience in the promotion of Christian social action, preferably in labour relations. The person appointed must have organizational leadership experience, be a good communicator, with the ability to promote the mission and growth of the organization.

Please apply in writing before November 15, 2001 to:
Neil J. Roos, Chair,
Leadership Search Committee
#100, 15483 104 Avenue
Surrey, BC V3R 1N9
Fax: (604) 583-6166
E-mail: surrey@clac.ca
Web: www.clac.ca

Christianity and Democracy

CHRISTIAN FAITH AND MODERN DEMOCRACY: GOD AND POLITICS IN THE FALLEN WORLD. By ROBERT P. KRAYNAK. *University of Notre Dame Press. 320 pp. $24.95 paper.*

***Reviewed by* Damon Linker**

AMERICA'S CULTURE WAR is not about culture. It is about religion—Christianity, in particular—and its role in the public life of the nation. On one side, secularists of various stripes insist that religion is the source of our greatest problems—prejudice and bigotry, ignorance and injustice—and thus ought to be relegated entirely to the private sphere of life, if not eliminated altogether. On the other side of the cultural divide, assorted religious intellectuals maintain that Christianity provides an essential moral foundation for liberal democratic government. Many go even further, to identify an essential connection between Christianity and democracy.

It is the great virtue of Robert P. Kraynak's *Christian Faith and Modern Democracy* to question the assumptions of both sides in the culture war. Not that he feigns neutrality in these important matters. As a self-described believing and practicing Roman Catholic, Kraynak, who teaches political philosophy at Colgate University, strongly supports those who advocate a greater role for the church in American public life. In his early chapters, he powerfully defends the view that liberalism is incapable of vindicating the human dignity on which liberal rights are based. This is the case because it is impossible to defend dignity with doubt about the highest ends of life, as liberalism has sought to do from the time of its origins in early modern Europe. Hence, liberalism needs Christianity in order to ground its most elemental moral claims.

But the bulk of Kraynak's book—well over four-fifths of it—is devoted to making a different, more controversial argument. Although liberalism requires a religious foundation, Christians, in Kraynak's view, should resist the temptation to synthesize liberal democratic and Christian principles. Such a synthesis must be rejected because Christianity cannot be "connected in principle to any form of government and may even be incompatible in crucial respects with liberal democracy."

The inevitable tension between the requirements of politics and faith is, of course, a very old theme in Christian thinking, going back at least as far as St. Augustine's doctrine of the "Two Cities," if not to Jesus Christ himself, who spoke of distinct duties to God and to Caesar. Unlike Judaism and Islam, which view the divine law

DAMON LINKER *is Associate Editor of* FIRST THINGS.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

in political terms as a civil or legal code, Christian divine law cannot, in Kraynak's words, "be codified directly into civil law or translated into a specific political order." The City of Man must inevitably fall short of the City of God. Christians should thus remain somewhat detached from the form of government that prevails at any given period of history. In the Middle Ages, when the dominant political arrangements were aristocracy and monarchy, the temptation was to overemphasize hierarchy and downplay the innate dignity of all human beings. Today, when our political assumptions are in many ways the reverse, Kraynak believes we need to be reminded that there is "something *inherently hierarchical* in the Christian religion."

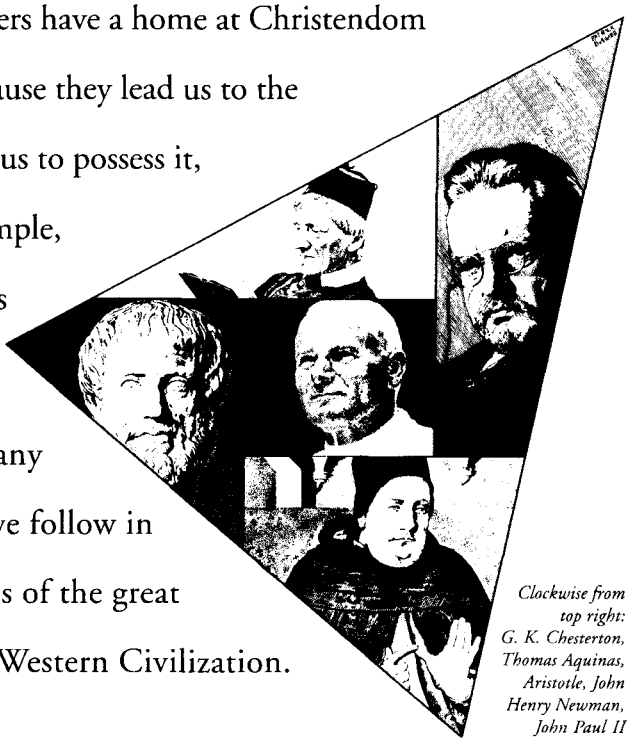
He finds evidence for such a hierarchy in the notion of the Apostolic Succession, which directly links contemporary church leaders to Jesus' chosen disciples, as well as in the Platonic-Aristotelian and Scholastic conception of a hierarchy of being and substance. To be sure, Luther and Calvin raised fundamental questions about the legitimacy of these notions of rank. Each, however, left the authority of other temporal hierarchies intact. Kraynak points out that Luther, for example, advised Christians to "obey established powers as authorities ordained by God." Even Calvin, whose political views have at times been interpreted democratically, defended a "limited theocracy governed by a moral elite who are not identical to the predestined elect but who may cooperate with them in governing."

To those who find such historical arguments unpersuasive and appeal instead to the gospel's message of universal dignity and brotherhood as a foundation for democratic politics, Kraynak points out that Scripture contains its own antidemocratic tendencies. Whereas modern democratic activists treat dignity as something "absolute," human dignity in the Bible is "selective." That is, while all human beings do partake in the spiritual dignity that persists from our creation in the image of God prior to the Fall, the Bible also "permits and even requires different degrees of dignity in the created and fallen world based on God's election of special people and the institution of human authorities." Dignity is at once "given and therefore 'inalienable' (as we would say today)" as well as being "something to be won or lost, merited or forfeited, augmented or diminished." According to Kraynak, it is this funda-

You Are Known by the Company You Keep . . .

These thinkers have a home at Christendom College because they lead us to the truth, teach us to possess it, and, by example, encourage us to love it.

Keep company with us as we follow in the footsteps of the great thinkers of Western Civilization.



Clockwise from top right: G. K. Chesterton, Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, John Henry Newman, John Paul II

For more information please contact:
Paul Heisler • Admissions Office • Christendom College
134 Christendom Drive • Front Royal, VA 22630 • (800) 877-5456
admissions@christendom.edu • www.christendom.edu

CHRISTENDOM COLLEGE
A Roman Catholic College

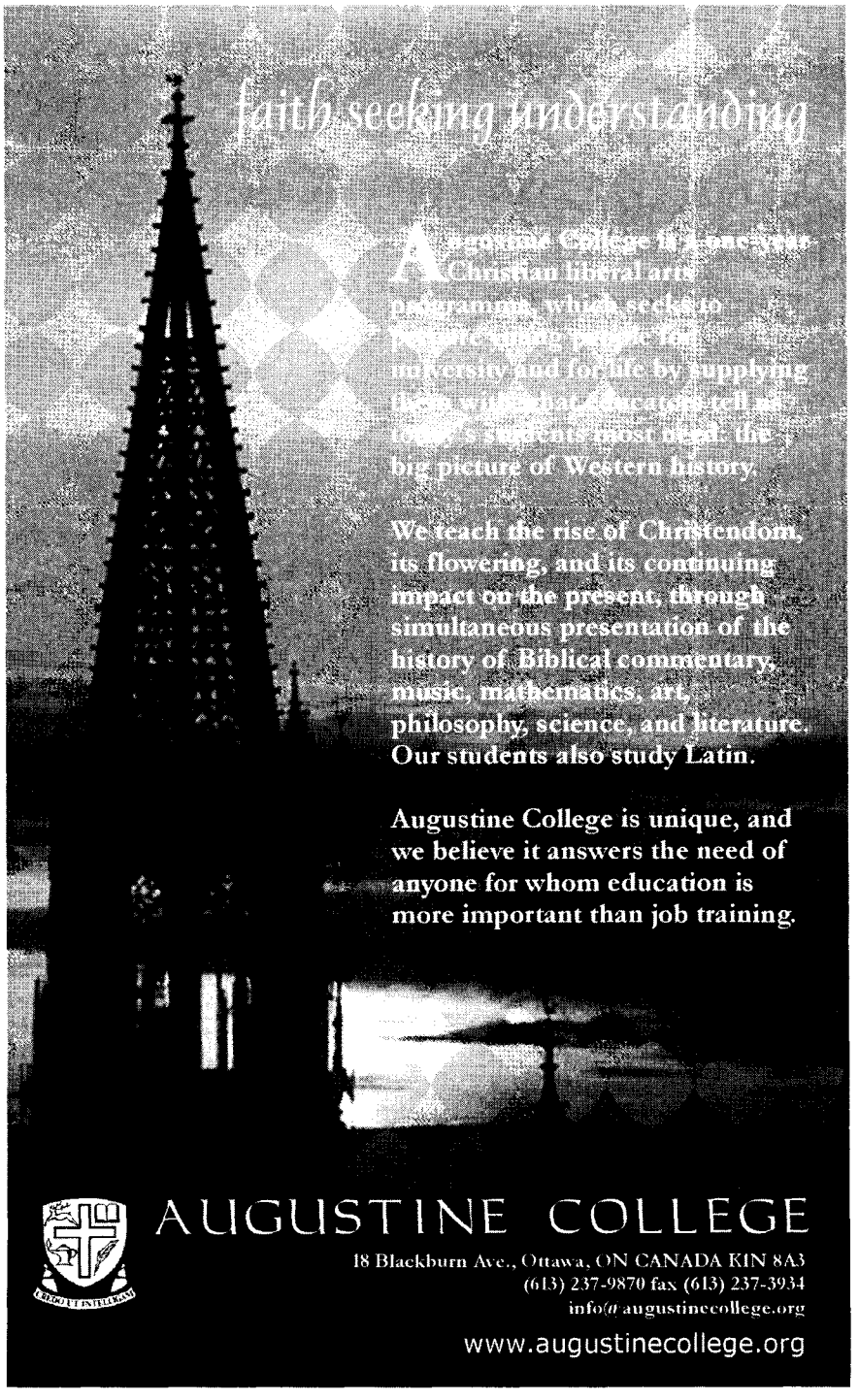
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

mental and ineradicable tension within the City of Man—between what might be called democratic and aristocratic principles of distinction—that explains Christianity's historic refusal to grant automatic legitimacy to any one form of government, including democracy.

Until, that is, the last few decades of the twentieth century. As Kraynak writes, "from both a historical and a theological perspective," it is quite extraordinary that within the past generation "almost all Christian churches and theologians (Protestant, Catholic, and, most recently, Eastern Orthodox) have embraced democracy and human rights as the core of their political teachings." To explain this remarkable development, Kraynak analyzes six movements that are commonly cited as causes of change in Christian politics. They range from medieval Conciliarism and the Protestant Reformation (with its emphasis on individual conscience) to the struggles of Christian churches against colonialism, slavery, industrial exploitation of workers, and, above all, totalitarianism. While he admits that all of these factors played a role in the Church's gradual acceptance of democracy, Kraynak chooses to focus on one (somewhat surprising) cause in particular: the influence of Immanuel Kant's theological and political ideas.

Kraynak claims that Kant's influence can be detected throughout contemporary religious and political culture. "On a superficial level, one can see the impact of . . . Kantian ideas on the ethical discourse of modern Christians who now speak as much or more about 'persons,' 'dignity,' 'rights,' and 'respect' than about sin, redemption, compassion, heaven, and hell." But Kant's influence is, he claims, even more apparent in the conception of the *Imago Dei* that prevails among Christians today. It is a conception that leaves no room for hierarchical distinctions among human beings and instead emphasizes that each of us is a "human person" possessing reason and free will as well as inalienable human rights. These assumptions led Kant to conclude that "the one and only legitimate constitution is a pure republic," just as they have led modern theologians and popes to declare that (in Kraynak's words) "setting up a democratic political system that protects human rights" is an "unconditional political imperative that demands universal implementation."

Liberal democracies are unquestionably preferable to the monstrous totalitarian tyrannies of the twentieth


faith seeking understanding
We teach the rise of Christendom, its flowering, and its continuing impact on the present, through simultaneous presentation of the history of Biblical commentary, music, mathematics, art, philosophy, science, and literature. Our students also study Latin.
Augustine College is unique, and we believe it answers the need of anyone for whom education is more important than job training.
AUGUSTINE COLLEGE
18 Blackburn Ave., Ottawa, ON CANADA K1N 8A3
(613) 237-9870 fax (613) 237-3934
info@augustinecollege.org
www.augustinecollege.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

century. Likewise, there is no denying that, by adopting the rhetoric of rights and a universal democratic imperative, Christian leaders (such as John Paul II) have been able to wage an effective war of words against these forces of evil. Yet Kraynak worries that the very decency of liberal democratic principles will blind us to the "*subversive power* of rights." While some (such as, once again, John Paul II) manage to keep "Kant in a box" by teaching that "the rights of the person are clearly directed to higher ends," many modern theologians and members of the clergy are less cautious. They believe that rights can simply be "detached from their subversive premises" and made compatible with "a sense of gratitude and duty to God."

In Kraynak's view, such a position is naive. It fails to recognize that rights tend to put authorities of all kinds (political as well as religious and paternal) on the defensive. Although rights can be used to further justice—as when the politically oppressed assert them in order to undermine the authority of despotic governments—it is exceedingly difficult to prevent them from being directed against such nonpolitical and socially necessary hierarchies as "the family, the church, traditional educational institutions, . . . or the military chain of command." This is because the "concept of human rights lacks an inherent principle of self-denial or self-limitation."

In making this highly contentious claim, Kraynak draws heavily on the arguments of Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, as he also does in the final chapters of the book, where he sketches a "prudential" theory of government that, given the current historical and political situation, he believes could temper the rights-based form of democracy that dominates the world today. Described alternately as "constitutionalism without liberalism" and "constitutionalism under God," Kraynak's ideal arrangement for the contemporary City of Man would conceive of the "goods of the temporal realm" in terms of "a hierarchy of ends rather than in terms of consent or human rights." Which is to say that Kraynak's state, in addition to securing "civil peace and stability," as ours does, would go further, to foster "moral virtue and civic piety or the creation of an atmosphere that nurtures virtue and piety in a comprehensive 'high culture' that elevates rather than degrades the human soul." The people would be given a say in political matters through political representation, but various corporate hierarchies (in the family, the church, and the military) would dominate their private lives, acting "as a bulwark against the leveling tendencies of democracy."

Of course none of these proposals has even the slightest chance of coming to pass in modern-day America. Kraynak is certainly aware of this. Yet he maintains that they are worthy of our consideration because they "give us the true perspective on politics by indicating that liberal democracy is a second or third choice compared to more hierarchically arranged regimes." That Kraynak largely succeeds at pulling off what amounts to being a purely theoretical exercise is a tribute to his command of Western political theory as well as the power of his arguments.

Not that those arguments are entirely unproblematic. On the contrary, Kraynak's project is plagued throughout by a tendency—common to many political theorists—to simplify and exaggerate the influence of philosophical ideas in political and social life. Take, as a relatively minor illustration, Kraynak's treatment of Kant and his role in promulgating egalitarian liberalism. The Prussian philosopher has certainly exercised

There is a **Catholic college** in the mountains of Southern California
unlike anything in your experience.

Here, students don't read textbooks or attend lectures. Rather, in small group seminars students and teachers discuss, debate, test, and come to understand the original writings of some of the greatest minds of Western Civilization.

Many of the permanent faculty are dead, but you know them by name: Einstein, Dante, Newman, Augustine, Homer, to name a few. But the truth they pursued never dies. It is unchanging. And studying the writings of these great seekers of truth is a sure path to understanding. Along the way, the fog of skepticism recedes and revealed is the solid ground of the Catholic intellectual tradition and the harmony of faith and reason. It is an exhilarating experience, one that liberates the mind and strengthens the spirit.

Learn more about this unique approach to liberal education. Contact:

Tom Susanka, Director of Admissions
(800) 643-9797 • www.thomasaquinas.edu

Thomas Aquinas College
10,000 N. Ojai Road • Santa Paula, Ca 93060

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

an extraordinary influence on the development of modern religious ideas, especially on the German tradition of liberal theology. But that influence has by no means been universal within Christianity, where (to cite but one example) Karl Barth's antiliberal neo-orthodoxy has left a powerful mark on twentieth-century thinking.

Similarly, Catholicism's conditional endorsement of liberal modernity since Vatican II is far less a sign that the Church has been taken over by Kantians than it is a result of its recognition, in the wake of two world wars and the Holocaust, that liberal democracy is, on the whole, more compatible with Christian teaching than any political alternative currently available. While Kraynak may well be right to be concerned that this measured acceptance of democracy has become for some an enthusiastic embrace, the proximate cause of this development cannot be found in the ideas of an eighteenth-century philosopher few contemporary Christians have read.

MORE TROUBLING IS the effect of Kraynak's preoccupation with theory on his understanding of America. Liberal political philosophy has indeed exercised a significant and substantial influence on American life, but it has hardly been the only such influence. The United States has developed in the way it has through a complex combination of philosophic intentions with religious, political, social, economic, and scientific ideas and events beyond the control of any one man or group of philosophers. Kraynak's analysis would have been strengthened—and his radical proposals for reform somewhat moderated—by a bit of Tocquevillean circumspection about the limited influence of political theory and the continued vitality of religious and political practice in America.

Still, these are relatively minor reservations. Kraynak has performed a valuable service by teaching us that, although democratic America is a decidedly decent country and thus worthy of our devotion, we ought to be cautious about loving it—or, for that matter, any earthly city—too much. Only when we remain somewhat detached from our country do we attain the distance needed to evaluate it wisely. In the words of Pierre Manent, "To love democracy well, it is necessary to love it moderately."

But a measure of detachment is also liable to be a good thing for the faithful themselves. Aristotle points

SAINT LOUIS ABBEY

WHY A MONK AT SAINT LOUIS ABBEY?

A monk is one who has been smitten by the love of Christ – his love for us which awakens a corresponding love for him and a desire to be formed by him into his likeness. This formation takes place in the Spirit and through imperfect human beings who are also allowing themselves to be formed by him. The monk's goal is to surrender himself daily to the love of God until that love begins to become the animating principle of his whole being. He seeks a humble love, not a personal greatness or importance or even apostolic success. Through daily prayer and interaction with the word of God he learns to entrust his cares to the Lord, to await all from him, and to call for his help in the struggle against egoism and sin. At Saint Louis Abbey we try to live out our discipleship of Christ in spreading the good news of his love to others through the education of teenage boys, parish work based on the monastery and the ministry of hospitality. We believe that our regular monastic prayer is powerful because it is the prayer of Christ offered in the heart of the Church. It also gives witness, at the beginning of the new millennium, to the primacy of God in our lives.

Write for Information:

Father Ralph Wright, OSB • Saint Louis Abbey
500 South Mason Road • Saint Louis, MO 63141.
Tel: 1-800-638-1527 • E-mail: frralph@priory.org
WEB: www.stlouisabbey.org

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

out that only in the best city is it possible for the good citizen to be a good man. And the Church tells us that no City of Man can attain the perfection of the Kingdom of God. Kraynak rightly reminds us that the fate of Christianity—let alone that of individual Christians—cannot be the same as that of democracy in America.

BRIEFLY NOTED

Dante. By R. W. B. Lewis. *Viking. 205 pp. $19.95.*

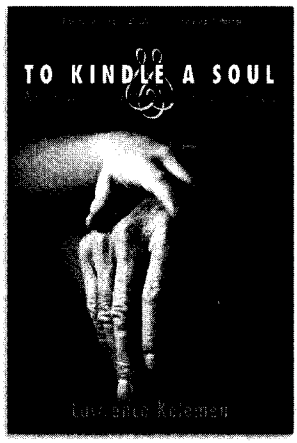
Dante: A Life in Works. By Robert Hollander. *Yale University Press. 222 pp. $25.*

The work of Dante Alighieri is a compendium of medieval history, culture, politics, and religion. The problem in understanding him is not so much a lack of information about the poet and his times, as how to come to grips with the mass of subjects that are relevant to the *Divine Comedy*. Even the good modern editions with notes raise almost as many questions as they answer. Yale's R. W. B. Lewis has written a rich and accessible introduction to Dante in his recent contribution to the Penguin Lives series. Lewis has also produced a comprehensive history, *The City of Florence*. He draws a great deal on that earlier work to situate Dante in one of the most important and vibrant of medieval cities. Florence was second only to Paris in size during the poet's lifetime and energized the early Italian Renaissance. Indeed, Pope Boniface VIII, says Lewis, seeing so many Florence-born ambassadors in Rome, called the Tuscan city "the fifth element of the cosmos." Lewis knows that the *Divine Comedy* and other Dantean works operate on several levels of meaning, but since he is writing a biography, he sticks close to what they say about Dante's life. Along the way, he offers many stunning surprises and never fails to enlighten. *Dante: A Life in Works*, by Princeton's Robert Hollander nicely complements Lewis' book. As his title indicates, he approaches Dante through his literary achievement. Hollander is one of the greatest living Dante scholars, and his recent translation (with his wife) of the *Inferno* demonstrated again his mastery of the vast scholarship on Dante. He examines the various disputed questions in a chronological commentary on the works, but he never lets the controversies obscure the literary power of the poet and his daring claims for the way human love turned him toward redemption: "There are, as a wag has put it, only two classes of readers that are deeply offended by Dante's claims for divine inspiration, believers and nonbelievers." No publisher, Hollander reminds us, would have thought this visit to the other world by an exiled poet-politician was likely to be a successful literary enterprise. That Dante has succeeded for over three-quarters of a millennium in making readers passionately interested in his story is only one measure of his success.

— Robert Royal

After Progress: American Social Reform and European Socialism in the Twentieth Century. By Norman Birnbaum. *Oxford University Press. 432 pp. $35.*

The attempt—and failure—to bring about a genuinely socialist society remains the most momentous political-historical phenomenon of our times. It is thus appropriate that scholars continue to study and reflect on the question of socialism. What is troubling is that so many appear



"Practical. Sobering. Invaluable."
—Senator Joseph Lieberman

"If all the world's parents read and adopted the lessons of this book, war would end by the next generation."
—Dennis Prager

Available at Bookstores Everywhere

Visit www.lawrencekelemen.com
A Targum/Leviathan Press Publication
To Order Call 1-800-538-4284

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

blind to the implications of that momentous phenomenon. Norman Birnbaum has done considerable research into socialist ideas and movements in the United States, Britain, France, Germany, and Russia. But he seems to have learned little. His book is suffused with bitterness over the incapacity of these ideas and movements to transform political and social life in a fundamental way. Page after page, he bemoans a multitude of unrealized possibilities and alternatives. The result is a combination of careful scholarship with the barely contained utopian impulses of a former true believer. Birnbaum's unhappiness arises from what he sees as a lack of meaning and sense of community in contemporary Western societies. These are legitimate complaints and preoccupations—ones shared by many figures on different points of the ideological spectrum. Yet few of them share Birnbaum's far-left conviction that some sweeping—and unspecified—social transformation could deliver us from these ills by overthrowing the capitalist order. While he should be applauded for recognizing that the Bolshevik Revolution, which grew out of similar discontents, amounted to an "enormous tragedy," his insistence on fanning the flames of political radicalism signals an unwillingness to reflect on whether revolutionary ends themselves, rather than some context-dependent contingency, might be the ultimate cause of totalitarian brutality. If Birnbaum's book teaches us anything at all, it is that, although the opportunity to give effect to revolutionary hopes may have vanished for the time being, these hopes themselves are unlikely to disappear any time soon.

— Paul Hollander

THE FACES OF JANUS: MARXISM AND FASCISM IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY. By A. JAMES GREGOR. *Yale University Press. 256 pp. $35.*

A. James Gregor sets out to demonstrate fascism's similarity to communism—a proposition that will no doubt lead to discomfort among those who insisted throughout the Cold War that the latter system was far more benign than the former. He builds a convincing case, no doubt partially because of his decision to focus on Italian fascism—as well as the third world dictatorships that, following World War II, came to resemble it—rather than Nazi Germany. Gregor does not dispute that, at first, the Soviet system differed markedly from its Fascist counterparts, at least in theory and aim. Yet the two systems "share[d] a common origin in response to . . . common problems" with the process of modernization and industrialization. So similar were these origins and the assumptions that the two systems made about how to solve them that they eventually converged toward the goal of creating a "new society, and even a new man" as the only adequate response. While an elaboration of the relationship between fascism and Nazism would have enriched Gregor's argument, his study is nevertheless enlightening and revealing.

— PH

MAIMONIDES' EMPIRE OF LIGHT: POPULAR ENLIGHTENMENT IN AN AGE OF BELIEF. By RALPH LERNER. *University of Chicago Press. 221 pp. $35.*

Of all those who were personally students of Leo Strauss, none of them has remained closer to Jewish teaching than Ralph Lerner. One of Strauss' greatest achievements was to persuade a number of assimilated or nearly assimilated young Jews that they could, with intellectual integrity, take up again the Jewish tradition. No one seems to have been so effectively persuaded as Lerner. In this book, he presents his own extended introduction to those works of Maimonides (who for both Strauss and Lerner is the philosophical Jew par excellence) that attempt to address more than just a philosophical elite. Following his introductions of these short works, Lerner presents excellent English translations of them by some of the best Jewish medievalists. Maimonides' main concern was to dispel popular superstitions about Judaism, both because they falsely portray it and because they provide ammunition for enemies of the Jews who argue that Jewish revelation is intellectually and morally inferior to their own revelations. The spiritual and even physical continuity of the Jews and Judaism requires that the masses of Jews understand, as best they can, that the Torah is truly the law given by God to "a wise and

The Re-Birth of a Classic!
***Outline of Sanity* by G.K. Chesterton**
After 75 years, this brilliant, engaging work is available again as a single volume, in quality paperback...only from IHS Press.

In *Outline of Sanity* Chesterton reveals...
- The pitfalls of both socialism and capitalist monopoly.
- The modern economic tendency to deprive people of real wealth.
- That "Distributism" is the common-sense answer!

IHS PRESS — Non est enim potestas nisi a Deo
The exclusive publisher...dedicated exclusively to the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church.

Low introductory price!
$12.95 plus $2.50 S/H
Money Back Guarantee!

To order: call (757) 623-0309
e-mail: order@ihspress.com
or check to: IHS Press, Dept. F
222 W. 21st St, Suite F-122
Norfolk, VA 23517.
Also available in bookstores.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

understanding people" (Deuteronomy 4:6). In other words, Jews should embrace philosophic understanding of their faith and the world in order not to succumb to views that might appear to be truer and more noble. (*Mutatis mutandis*, Pope John Paul II argues the same about Catholicism in his encyclical *Fides et Ratio*.) What do we derive from Lerner's perceptive portrayal of Maimonides' contribution to the spiritual health of his people? In an age when Jewish survival is argued on grounds of nostalgia or spitefulness at its would-be exterminators, Maimonides the popular educator provides a model for Jewish teachers, especially philosophical ones, to keep persuading the people that it is not so much that the Torah is good for the Jews, but that it is good for the Jews to affirm the Torah's truth and attempt to demonstrate it as much as possible. This book is highly recommended.

— *David Novak*

One True God: Historical Consequences of Monotheism. By Rodney Stark. *Princeton University Press. 256 pp. $24.95.*

Sociologist Rodney Stark is, as they say, controversial. In book after book, he sets out to overturn received wisdoms, and with his earlier *The Rise of Christianity* he ruffled the feathers of the historical establishment. The present book, which is also eminently worth reading, continues that pattern as Stark gives new meaning to "interdisciplinary" in his imaginative forays into sociology, history, comparative religion, and theology to demonstrate the ways in which monotheism shaped the Western world, and thereby the world. He deals chiefly, of course, with Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, but includes an extended excursus on why Hinduism may also be viewed as monotheistic. He effectively debunks the notion popularized in the nineteenth century—chiefly by Jewish scholars, which is regretted by contemporary Jewish scholars—that Islam was ever so much more tolerant of religious minorities than Christianity, and offers interesting speculations on why anti-Semitism (an anachronistic term) broke out when and where it did over the centuries. Stark persists in his long attachment to the economist school of the sociology of religion, "explaining" religion in terms of exchange theory, rational choice, cost-benefit analysis, etc. As in past books, that persistence becomes an annoyance that gets in the way of his argument at least as often as it serves as a useful explanatory device. Like other critical theories—gender, race,

POINT LOMA NAZARENE UNIVERSITY
Centennial Conference
Creative Imagination: Embodying Time, Space and Form
FEBRUARY 6-9, 2002
San Diego, California
FEATURING:
Kathleen Norris
Author of The Cloister Walk and Amazing Grace: A Vocabulary of Faith

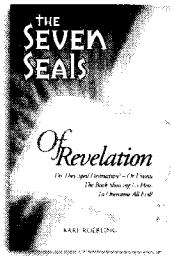
Conference plenary sessions include:
- Frederica Mathewes-Green
- Robert Wuthnow
- Father Timothy Joyce
- Calvin Miller
- Emily Greisinger

Other conference highlights:
- Concurrent sessions
- Exhibit featuring sculptor Peter Mitten
- Concert with Jung-Ho Pak and members of the San Diego Symphony
- Preview theatre production of *Godspell*

Co-sponsored by PLNU's Wesleyan Center for Twenty-First Century Studies and the Writer's Symposium by the Sea

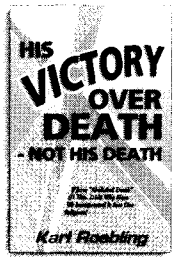
For more information, contact the Wesleyan Center at PLNU at 619.849.2549 or visit the web at www.ptloma.edu/wesleyan

PERSPECTIVES IN A CHANGING ERA
BOOKS BY KARL ROEBLING
Judeo-Christian • Bible Based • Nondenominational • Indexed



The Seven Seals of Revelation
Do They Spell Destruction? – Or Unseal The Book Showing Us How To Overcome All Evil?
Over 200 Bible References $14.95
ISBN 0942910-17-6 *Paper 205 pp.*

The Search for the Promised Land
The New/Old Civilization of Seekers for the Spiritual Land Pursues its Goal.
"...recommended reading for all those with an interest in spirituality..." (Midwest Book Review)
150 Bible References $14.95
ISBN 0942910-16-8 *Paper 240 pp.*



His Victory Over Death –Not His Death
Jesus "Abolished Death" (II Tim. 1:10) Opening the Way for All Christian Overcomers
75 Bible References $12.95
ISBN 0942910-19-2 *Paper 80 pp.*

ORDER FROM *your* bookstore *or* www.amazon.com (Books: Karl Roebling) *or* www.dynapress.com (money back) • e-mail: itsdifferent@dynapress.com
P.O. Box 150217 • Altamonte Springs, FL 32715-0217

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

class conflict, sexual repression—economism results in reductionism and implausible squeezings of facts to fit the theory, although in this book Stark seems more aware of that danger and underscores that his explanatory system should not be taken as a device for discrediting the ways in which believers understand their beliefs and actions. *One True God* is bracing, rollicking, startling, belligerent, informative, and guaranteed to provoke second and third thoughts about what readers thought they always knew about religion and the history of the world.

The Hauerwas Reader. Edited by John Berkman and Michael Cartwright. *Duke University Press. 729 pp. $27.95 paper.*

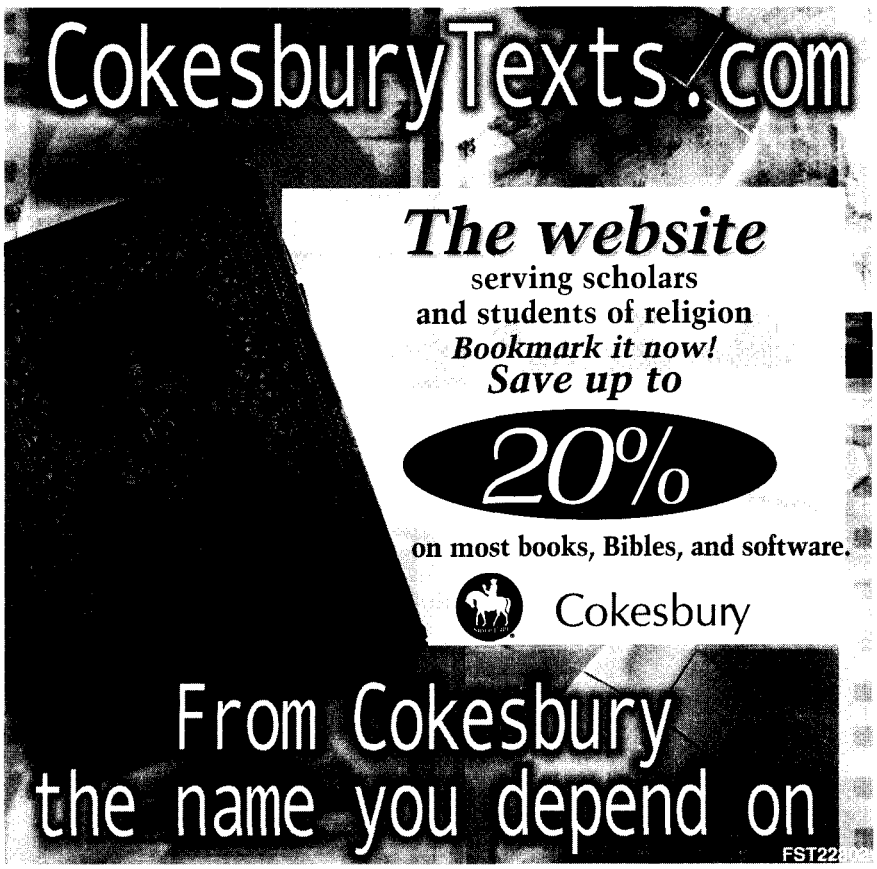
Critics will say that this is all the Stanley Hauerwas you will ever need, and quite a bit more. Admirers will view it as the first course of a magnificent feast. The collection might have been titled *The Essential Hauerwas*, in two senses of that term: it captures the gist of the person and enterprise, and understanding Hauerwas is necessary to understanding theological ethics in our time. Hauerwas outrages and instructs, and is almost always worth the bother.

Breaking Faith: The Pope, the People, and the Fate of Catholicism. By John Cornwell. *Penguin. 296 pp. $24.95.*

The author of *Hitler's Pope* explains how the Catholic Church has broken faith with his understanding of what the Catholic Church should be. He is hopeful that, if the next pope is a kind and loving man who agrees with him, the Church might be able to survive the twenty-first century.

Love & Economics: Why The Laissez-Faire Family Doesn't Work. By Jennifer Roback Morse. *Spence. 273 pp. $27.95.*

Morse is an economist who was cured of libertarianism by becoming a mother. The book is a magnificent defense of marriage and family, but it is also more than that. It offers a readable and penetrating analysis of the ways in which rationality and calculated self-interest in human relations has stifled the expression of self-giving love, without which nothing works. She begins from the simple observation that we all enter life as babies. We never outgrow being dependent, but we can grow in our ability to give. Warmly recommended.



Characters in Search of Their Author. By Ralph McInerny. *University of Notre Dame Press. 138 pp. $25.*

The Gifford Lectures of 1999-2000 delivered by the extraordinary, and extraordinarily prolific, philosopher of Notre Dame. McInerny joins learning, wit, and lucidity in producing a reliable, and enjoyable, guide to reasoned faith and faithful reason.

The Fall & Other Poems. By J. Bottum. *St. Augustine's Press. 68 pp. $7 paper.*

Some of the poems have appeared in these pages, more elsewhere. Bottum, back-of-the-book editor at the *Weekly Standard*, is one of the most consistently rewarding poets writing today. Faith, hope, and love keep breaking through the surrounding dusk. Highly recommended.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

September 11—Before and After

September 11. This is written the day after, just under the deadline for this issue. For years to come, I expect, we will speak of "before" and "after" September 11. I was on my way to say the nine o'clock Mass at Immaculate Conception, on 14th Street and First Avenue, when the hijacked airline hit the first tower. There was a small crowd at the corner of 14th and I remarked that there seemed to be a fire at the World Trade Center and we should pray for the people there. But I could not stay or I would be late for Mass. Only after Mass did I discover what had happened. How strange beyond understanding, I thought, that as we were at the altar offering up, as Catholics believe, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, only a little to the south of us was rising, in flames and mountains of smoke, a holocaust of suffering and death. That, too, was subsumed and offered on Calvary. It occurred to me that Friday, only three days away, is the feast called The Triumph of the Cross. Exactly.

The first commentary I heard was from a woman coming out of the church: "That's what we get for unconditionally supporting Israel." I wondered how many others would draw that lesson. Watching television during the day, the question was several times asked, "Why do they hate us so much?" And the answer given in one word was "Israel." The further question implied was, Is our support for Israel worth this? What justice requires us to do in order to punish the perpetrators and ward off even greater evil is done for Israel, of course, but it is done, much more comprehensively, for the civilization that Christians, Jews, and everyone else will now come to see more clearly as it is seen by others: the Christian West.

My part of Manhattan is a long string of hospitals, and I went to be of whatever help I could. After a couple of hours it became obvious that very few of the injured were coming into the hospitals. The doleful conclusion is that, except for the many who were able to get out and away, the people at ground zero are dead. Many thousands they are saying today; no doubt we will find out how many in the days ahead. It will be a city of funerals for weeks to come, as bodies and pieces of bodies are identified. The church, the residence, and our offices are all north of 14th Street. At the house and office, everyone is safe. I am sure the same is not true of all our parishioners. It is weird. We can look down the avenues and see the still billowing smoke, as though watching a foreign country under attack, but of course it is our city, and our country.

Before and after September 11, what difference will it make? That's the subject of endless chatter and nobody knows. For what it's worth, I anticipate five major changes. It will inaugurate a time of national unity and sobriety in a society that has been obsessed by fake pluralisms while on a long and hedonistic holiday from history. Second, there will be an understandable passion for retaliation and revenge that could easily veer into reckless bellicosity. That is a danger. The other danger is that fear of that danger will compromise the imperative to protect and punish. Third, a legitimate concern for increased security will spark a legitimate concern for personal freedoms. Many will warn that freedom cannot be protected by denying freedom, and such warnings should not be lightly dismissed, even as we know that the liberty we cherish is not unbridled license but ordered liberty. Without order there can be no liberty; it is for liberty that we surrender license. I expect that many Americans who never understood that will now be having long second thoughts.

Fourth, after some initial sortings out, America will identify itself even more closely with Israel. Disagreements over the justice of how Israel was

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

founded and how it has maintained itself in existence will not disappear. But the diabolical face of the evil that threatens Israel, and us, is now unveiled. Among Americans and all who are part of our civilization, it will be understood that we must never surrender, or appear to be surrendering, to that evil. Finally, the question of "the West and the rest" will be powerfully sharpened, including a greatly heightened awareness of the global threats posed by militant Islam. Innocent Muslims in this country and Europe are undoubtedly in for some nastiness, and we must do our best to communicate the distinction between Islam and Islamism, knowing that the latter is the monistic fanaticism embraced by only a minority of Muslims. But almost inevitably, given the passions aroused and the difficulties of enforcing the law among people who are largely alien in their ways, such distinctions will sometimes get lost. We can only try to do our best by those Muslims who have truly chosen our side in "the clash of civilizations." It seems likely also that, after September 11, discussion about immigration policy will become more intense, and more candid.

That's a mixed bag of possible consequences, and, of course, I may be wrong about any or all of them. These are but first thoughts one day after. Only a little south of here thousands are buried under the rubble. So it is now to the tasks at hand. It will be the work of weeks, perhaps months, to give them a proper burial. The consolation of the living is a work without end.

FT

HARD SAYINGS

There are many ways of dealing with the "hard sayings" of Jesus. For instance, Luke 14, the gospel for the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. Jesus says, "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." The reading ends with, "Anyone who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple." One way to deal with such hard sayings and avoid disturbing the comfortable is to say that Jesus did not really mean it. Thus the little devotional comment in the Mass guide, *Celebrating the Eucharist*, published by Liturgical Press: "Jesus is using pretty radical language (not necessarily to be taken literally!) in order to give us a chance to consider pretty carefully what we do when we say yes to discipleship." Really? He wants us to "consider pretty carefully" what is entailed in taking up our cross and following him? Well, not a real cross, of course.

What would we do without homiletical guides to tame the "pretty radical language" of Jesus? Yes, he speaks about a devotion that claims all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind, but what he means, of course, is that God will be quite pleased with a piece of your heart, soul, and mind that is not previously claimed. Especially if you know that Jesus shares our devotion to "family values" and certainly would not want us to hate father, mother, children, etc. On the Luke 14 passage, the *International Bible Commentary* (also published by Liturgical Press) offers additional comfort: "Jesus is not literally demanding the 'hatred' of family and self. The Semitic mind, and the African as well, can only entertain two extremes: truth and falsehood, love and hate, light and darkness." That's a relief, then. We who are not Semites or Africans understand about nuances. We can "consider pretty carefully," but it's not as though a decision is called for, certainly not an unequivocal decision of yes or no.

Thus do the facilitators of a comfortable Christianity explain the words of Jesus by explaining them away. W. H. Auden (see Alan Jacobs, "Auden and the Limits of Poetry," August/September) wrote of his conviction that Jesus is Lord: "I believe because he fulfills none of my dreams, because he is in every respect the opposite of what he would be if I could have made him in my own image." But why not another great teacher, such as Buddha or Muhammad? Because, Auden wrote, "None of the others arouse all sides of my being to cry 'Crucify him.'" Well, really, that is going too far. Jesus did use some "pretty radical language," but it is not to be taken literally. And, after all, he was a Semite.

At the same time I was preparing my homily for that Sunday, the *New York Times* (yes, the *New York Times*) ran what might aptly be called a pro-life story about Jill Stanek. It was a sympathetic story, without a touch of liberal irony. Ms. Stanek was a nurse at Christ Hospital and Medical Center in Oak Lawn, Illinois, a presumably Christian hospital where they committed abortions and put babies who survived the procedure in a utility room to die. At first, Ms. Stanek insisted that she at least be permitted to hold the babies until they died. Then she went public about what the hospital was doing. Then she was fired.

"Sitting in her living room," writes reporter John Fountain, "she has no regrets." She has "a lot of trouble" understanding why people are not more concerned about God "and someday meeting their maker and having to explain themselves. I have a lot more trouble understanding why people are willing to forgo an eternity for concerns about what their peers think." "Not that it's easy," she adds. "It's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

painful." Maybe Jill Stanek has some Semite or African blood in her. Such a literalist: she can only "entertain two extremes"—killing babies or caring for them.

So what then did I say about the "hard sayings" of Jesus in Luke 14? You don't want the whole homily, but I said as best I could that Jesus meant, and means, what he said. That the love for which Jesus calls is so intense, so singular, so unqualified that all other loves (and he surely commands us to love others) appear, by comparison, to be not love at all, to be even the opposite of love, to be hatred. Or maybe the point is that even the best of loves (such as love for family) can become evil and hateful when not ordered to the love of God. But finally I did not "explain" the words of Jesus; I don't know why he said these deeply disturbing words. Perhaps to deeply disturb. In any event, I am sure they are meant to be taken very seriously indeed—as in what most people mean by "literally." Nobody in the congregation cried out for him to be crucified, but afterwards a woman said she is going to have to think pretty carefully about whether she wants to follow him. I am encouraging her to think about that *very* carefully.

FT

The Tangled Web

The tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive (Sir Walter Scott) becomes more tangled still with continuing practice. Such reflections are occasioned by reading this year's Pulitzer Prize-winning book by historian Joseph J. Ellis, *Founding Brothers*. Ellis, who has taught for many years at Mount Holyoke College, has been among the most acclaimed of American historians, and the present book would justly enhance his reputation, were it not for what we now know. The book is composed of six chapters, each telling in a most winsome manner the story of decisive encounters between the "founding brothers"—Washington, Hamilton, Madison, Jefferson, Adams, et al. Some of his friends in the guild of historians say that what we now know should not be permitted to detract from Ellis' stature as a historian, and there is a charitable impulse to agree. It is not easy, however.

Ellis does himself an injustice in comparing his book with Lytton Strachey's *Eminent Victorians*, that effetely sneering exercise in debunking one's betters. Strachey described his project this way: "He will row out over the great ocean of material, and lower down into it, here and there, a little bucket, which will bring up to the light of day some characteristic specimen, from those far depths, to be examined with a careful curiosity." "With this model in mind," writes Ellis, "I rowed out over the great ocean of material generated in the founding era of American nationhood, lowered my little bucket as far down as my rope could reach, then made sense out of the characteristic specimens I hoisted up with as much storytelling skill as my imagination allowed." The bucket of Ellis' scholarship, unlike Strachey's, is not little. Nor, and again unlike Strachey, is his purpose to expose buried dirt to the light of day. Ellis does not treat his characters as "specimens" to be "examined with a careful [and cruel] curiosity." In this book, as in his earlier works such as *American Sphinx* (on Jefferson) and *Passionate Sage* (on Adams), Ellis is, with exceptions, deeply respectful of the Founders and what they achieved.

Ellis distances himself from today's academic Stracheys who, employing critical theories represented as radical, tell us that the Founders were not who they seemed to be and were not doing what they thought they were doing. "My own efforts," Ellis writes, "constitute what I hope is a polite argument against the scholarly grain, based on a set of presumptions that are so disarmingly old-fashioned that they might begin to seem novel in the current climate." He presumes, for instance, that the central players in the drama were not marginal figures driven by previously hidden interests but political leaders at the center of the national story who shaped the arguments and institutions that have, in turn, shaped the American political story to this day. That is the account he offers "with as much storytelling skill as my imagination allowed." The problem is, and it cannot help but intrude upon one's reading of his account, that it now appears that Ellis has a very permissive imagination that allows what in a historian, or in anyone else for that matter, should not be allowed.

When some months ago the *Boston Globe* revealed that Ellis had for years been trading on a completely fabricated history of his years in Vietnam, including his serving on the staff of General William Westmoreland and engagement in dangerous missions, the reports met with cries of disbelief and disillusionment. But in fact, Ellis had never been in Vietnam, and spent the war years teaching at West Point. Ellis not only deployed the elaborately detailed fiction for purposes of dinner party chatter but repeated it in interviews with national media, and even made it a chief attraction in his popular course on the Vietnam War in American history. The charges against Ellis are not disputed, although there is disagreement on what to make of the unhappy facts.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Of course there is an element of personal tragedy in an eminent historian so exposing himself to shame, contempt, and, from some, pity. Others claim to see more in the Ellis case. It is, they say, but an instance revealing the degree to which the tangled web of deceit has spread through academic culture.

A Few Examples

To cite but a few examples from recent years, there is the infamous case of Martha Nussbaum of the University of Chicago, who, in the service of gay rights, gave false testimony in court—and it is hard to believe she did not know it was false—about the moral teaching of Plato and other ancients on homosexuality. (Her point being that "homophobia" is a Christian invention. Although some thought she should have been, Professor Nussbaum was not charged with perjury. For an account of the incident, see "In the Case of Martha Nussbaum" by Gerard V. Bradley, FT, June/July 1994). Then there was the 1989 case of the "historians' brief" filed with the Supreme Court by hundreds of academic historians in support of the abortion license, falsely claiming that abortion was countenanced by law and custom in the early years of the American experience (see Gerard V. Bradley, "Academic Integrity Betrayed," FT, August/September 1990). Also, and coming close to the matter of Ellis' present book, there was the highly acclaimed 1998 study by Annette Gordon-Reed, *Thomas Jefferson and Sally Hemings*, purporting to prove that the Jefferson had a child by one of his slaves, and entering as evidence a nineteenth-century letter in which words had clearly been changed in order to reverse its original meaning. Many other instances that have come to public knowledge might be cited, and of course there is the frequent fact of plagiarism and trimming the truth to accommodate special pleading in causes beyond number. What is to be expected when the very word truth is fashionably supplied with ironic quotation marks? The question of whether the case of Joseph Ellis has helped to thicken or unravel the tangled web of academic mendacity, however, should not distract our attention from peculiarly interesting aspects of the case itself.

While his friends, and others who are on uneasy terms with historical truth, say that Ellis' private fictions about Vietnam do not impugn his integrity as a historian, fictions taught as fact in the classroom are not private. Nor is his tangled web of deception confined to the course on Vietnam and American history. In the 1996 book *American Sphinx*, Ellis agreed with most Jefferson scholars since 1802, when the rumor was first circulated, that the Sally Hemings connection was unsubstantiated and implausible. That is also the conclusion reached this year by a commission of scholars, both pro- and anti-Jefferson, who studied the DNA evidence and related arguments.

But Ellis is now firmly on the other side. In *Founding Brothers* he writes that "this delectable morsel of scandal [was] confirmed as correct beyond any reasonable doubt by DNA studies done in 1998." What led him to change his historical judgment? Despite his claims about going "against the scholarly grain" of academic fashion, Ellis wrote last year that Jefferson is "the dead-white-male who matters most," making him the "most valued trophy in the cultural wars." Also, and by no means incidentally, the new "evidence" of the DNA study was rushed to press smack in the middle of the Bill Clinton impeachment proceedings. Ellis was a leader of the partisan forces defending Clinton. Remember the argument: it's all about sex; everybody does it; other Presidents did it; even the great Jefferson did it—not with an intern but with a slave, and with the consequence of a baby that left no doubt about what the meaning of "is" is when it comes to having sex.

Secrets Kept from Himself

Of course the bill of impeachment was not about Clinton's indulgence of his sexual appetites but about his perjuries in the attempted cover-up of what he had done. In explaining Jefferson and exculpating Clinton (and himself?), Ellis is interested in the psychology of mendacity. Thus, it would seem, Ellis offers us Clinton refracted through his construal of Jefferson, and all refracted through his own entanglement in a web of lies. At the time of the impeachment, a Democratic Senator said that Clinton "is a very good liar." But of course he was not, since a very good liar does not get a reputation for being a very good liar.

Ellis provides expert testimony on the difficulties in lying well. Jefferson, he writes in *Founding Brothers*, was given to interpreting reality as he wanted it to be. He very much disliked argument and uncomfortable truths because they disturbed "the voices he heard inside himself [which] were all harmonious and agreeable, reliable expressions of the providentially aligned universal laws that governed the world as he knew it." The "core" of Jefferson's character, says Ellis, was "elusiveness." When an opponent published letters incriminating Jefferson in wrongdoing that he had denied, "Jefferson seemed genuinely surprised at the revelation, suggesting that for him the deepest secrets were not the ones he kept from his enemies but the ones he kept from himself." One cannot help but wonder whether Ellis was surprised by the reports in the *Boston Globe*.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

And surely, barring a capacity for disassociation that would be judged pathological, there must have been at work a measure of personal introspection when Ellis wrote of Jefferson's "capacity for self-deception that permitted him to deny, and with utter sincerity, the vanities and ambitions lurking in his own soul," reflecting "the moralistic categories that shaped all his political thinking [and] fit perfectly the romantic formula that history writing seemed to require." James Nuechterlein memorably wrote of Clinton that he seemed to be "serially sincere," meaning that he sincerely meant whatever he was saying at the moment. Ellis would appear to agree, and to more than half admire the trait in Clinton even as, in order to excuse it in Clinton, he attributes it to Jefferson. As for himself and his work, Ellis has not to date addressed "the romantic formula that history writing seemed to require." Perhaps he will offer a public explanation, but then, who will believe him?

Never Ever

The Christian tradition is very definite about the evil of lying, and some have thought that—in the case of St. Augustine, for instance—it is excessively rigorous. Parents teach their children never to tell a lie, and then the "never" is attenuated by the everyday "white lies" that are deemed necessary to getting along, and by exquisitely complicated discussions of "quandary ethics" at the margins of life's extremities. (For instance: If you were hiding Jews in your house, would you tell the truth to a Nazi Jew-killer who asked if there are any Jews in your house? There is, I believe, a convincing answer, but that is for another day.) I confess to having told my share of fibs, but with each passing year I have become more convinced that to tell a lie, any lie, is to besmirch reality. What is true need not always be told and sometimes, as in the case of confidences, should not be told. But to lie is to soil and make ugly the order of truth, which is beautiful. It is to make the world more unreliable; it is to sin against words, and words bear the structure of trust on which all life depends—penultimately life with one another, and ultimately life with God. One lie, every lie, wounds the world.

The tale of Joseph Ellis is a personal tragedy, but a personal tragedy with large public meaning. What he did and what Clinton did—and maybe what Jefferson did, although I don't know whether to trust Ellis on that—was egregious, but its egregiousness alerts us to the everyday patterns of mendacity so smoothly, and wrongly, tolerated. And not only in the academy. Scott had it right: "Oh, what a tangled web we weave when first we practice to deceive." The thing is not to begin. Once begun, there is no ending, for lies beget the lies by which they are sustained on their inexorable course from the wounding to the killing of trust. Inexorable, that is, apart from repentance and amendment of life. Your parents were right, even if they did not always live the truth they taught: Never, never ever, tell a lie.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ There are conservatives, and then there are conservatives. The *Spectator* of London frequently reflects a nutty brand of Tory conservatism, as in an article in support of eugenics by Terence Kealey of Buckingham University. Mr. Kealey is all over the place. He appears to quote favorably Chesterton's observation that "Eugenicists have discovered how to combine hardening of the heart with softening of the head." And he terms "horrific" the statements of earlier eugenicists such as the Social Darwinist H. G. Wells, who said in 1901: "The swarms of black, brown, dirty-white, and yellow people have to go. It is their portion to die out." He also notes that in the early twentieth century, Germans and others admired the forced sterilization of the "unfit" that was widely practiced in the U.S. Then, of course, there was that other unpleasantness: "Eugenics has never recovered from its associations with Hitler and the Nazis. Nor should it." That being said, Mr. Kealey proceeds to argue for the rehabilitation of eugenics. "It is essential, surely, to winnow out good eugenics from bad eugenics, to separate the science from the abuse." He is especially enthusiastic about cloning human beings and related efforts to improve the quality of the species. There is, to be sure, the cautionary tale of Nazism. "Where did it go wrong? Why was Nazi science so perverted?" Mr. Kealey asks. "The answer, surely, lies in one man and his odious movement." And since Hitler is dead and none of us are Nazis, what's to worry? Surely (as Mr. Kealey is prone to saying) the danger is not with science run amok. "It is usual for historians of science to claim that Hiroshima witnessed the death of innocence for science. Actually, one can make a good case for Hiroshima as a humanitarian solution to the Second World War." (See above on hardening of the heart and softening of the head.) Based on his reading of Matt Ridley's *Genome*, Mr. Kealey assures us that "today's eugenics is potentially safe." A nice phrase that, "potentially safe." He allows that "we are entering a worrying new world where some people will be cloned while others will be

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rendered immortal and yet others will have their intelligences and appearances tweaked." "If applied with discretion, these are benign technologies," he observes, noting the benign benefits of the present practice of aborting unborn babies with disabilities. As to who will be in charge of the department of discretion in his brave new world, Mr. Kealey says it must not be the government. That is what went wrong with Nazism, he says. (So apparently the problem was not just "one man and his odious movement.") "To guide us through the new world of eugenics, we will need institutions that are independent and disinterested." What a very good idea: independent and disinterested institutions that will guide us in deciding who gets cloned, who gets tweaked, and who gets killed. Eugenics needs no state funding, he writes. "It needs state vigilance and a separation of powers." Without funding, control, or regulation of research, the state should nonetheless exercise vigilance. Now what about that don't you understand? Mr. Kealey concludes by urging that we bypass the Nazi unpleasantness and return to the eugenics project of a century ago. "The possible benefits are huge. As long as we can reserve the scientists their freedom but allow them no power, then we should extract the maximum benefits from the minimum of risks." So that's clear now: scientists should be free to do what they want but not have the power to do what they want. The management of this neat trick will be left to unspecified "institutions that are independent and disinterested." Well, just as long as somebody is in charge. The writer is Terence Kealey, the magazine is the *Spectator*, the disposition is called conservatism. See above on softening of the head.

■ A dubious achievement of much "family values" activism is that it makes marriage appear to be a dull and dreary business to which people understandably seek alternatives. And the contemporary academy is awash in alternatives, writes Daniel Cere of McGill University in the *Public Interest*. In fact, courses and studies in courtship and marriage are notable by their absence in the academy, as is also noted in Amy and Leon Kass' splendid book in the everyday ethics series, *Wing to Wing, Oar to Oar*. The hot thing today is "close-relationship theory," and it comes in many wrappings. There are various economic "exchange theory" explanations of why people "hook up." Then there is sociobiology, or evolutionary psychology, as it is sometimes called. Cere writes: "Sociobiology offers a rollicking comic spoof on the world of romance and power. In the world of sociobiology, lovers are bustling about, stumbling through their relationships, deceiving one another, wooing and warring with one another from very different, even contradictory, scripts of love—and yet, somehow, when all is said and done, these mismatched lovers land in bed together, men on top, cunningly trapped by the inexorable logic of reproductive success. Meanwhile, in the public sphere, men exhaust themselves to succeed in the worlds of high finance and global politics in order to be 'attractive to the next pretty blond that happens to pass by.'" Cere says of his essay: "This is not a plea for homespun 'family values' and virtues. 'Family values' discourse may actually contribute to our cultural apathy about marriage by obscuring the more radical, startling, and unsettling characteristics of monogamous marriage. Marriage is an erotic bond that bridges the fundamental sexual divide within the human species. It is an intersexual coupling, but it is not just about self-enhancing satisfaction; it is a procreative bond that generates human life. It resonates through the poetry, religion, art, myth, and symbols of the human spirit. Marriage embraces the life, the passions, the beauty, the journeys, the betrayals, the dreams, and, ultimately, the death of the other. A symptom of the curious flatness of our postmodern sexual culture is its growing inability to perceive the elemental depths and power of this primordial human bond."

■ A bishop in the Southwest writes a pastoral letter on the importance of the sacrament of reconciliation. "Some of you may have had a bad experience going to confession and don't want to go anymore. Don't let that hold you back! Our priests have grown in pastoral sensitivity and kindness, and want to help you be reconciled with the Lord." They're better at forgiving sins now? What ever happened to *ex opere operato?* Some might go so far as to claim that it was the insensitive and uncaring priests who used to test, and thereby strengthen, faith. A friend who is a nationally prominent public figure decided after many years away that it was time to get right with Christ and the Church. He called the local parish to find out when confessions are scheduled, and was told that it isn't regularly scheduled and it isn't called confession anymore, but "the sacrament of reconciliation is celebrated by appointment." Not a good sign. He showed up at the appointed hour and the priest, inviting him to take an easy chair in the rectory living room, began with, "How do you feel about yourself, Bob?" Bob (not his name) fled the scene as gracefully as he could and for some months forgot about being reconciled. He tells me that he later popped into a downtown church that posted hours for confessions, went into the confessional, knelt, "Bless me, Father, for I have sinned," said what needed to be said, received some sensible words of advice, was absolved, did his penance, and walked out

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

a free man. He didn't say whether the priest was sensitive or kind.

■ At first it was going to be called the Office on Community and Faith-Based Initiatives. John DiIulio insisted that Faith-Based come first in the title, and so it was. Perhaps that was a mistake. Perhaps it was a mistake to put Faith-Based in the title at all. Why not just Community Initiatives, it being made clear that there would be no discrimination against community initiatives that are faith-based? Many such questions have been raised about President Bush's historic proposal to recognize and support the role of "mediating institutions" in meeting social needs. Extreme church-state separationists, as well as figures such as Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, worry out loud about the dangers of religious nuts (e.g., Nation of Islam, Scientology) using public funds to promote their doctrines. Joel Belz of *World* magazine contends that such worries are the result of a deep conceptual confusion. Everything in life is faith-based, he says; everybody puts his faith in something or the other and is prone to proselytize on behalf of his decision. "The question isn't whether you have faith. The question is where you have put it." Belz continues: "Nor is it just evangelists and missionaries who try to 'proselytize.' That's the work of every teacher in America (even those in state schools), the calling of every public radio or TV commentator, and the task of every politician. All of them are regularly asking you to adjust your worldview, to shift your point of reference, and to put your confidence somewhere besides where you have regularly placed it. They do this with abandon, and with no fear at all that Uncle Sam might swoop in and threaten to take away their funding unless they adjust their message. So why do they get federal funds to do exactly what others are prohibited from doing?" There is an attractiveness to that familiar argument. The great constitutional scholar Philip Kurland proposed a "neutrality doctrine" that aimed at cutting through all the agitations about the religion clause of the First Amendment. A version of that doctrine is powerfully advanced by Justice Antonin Scalia. In this view, an organization, belief, or action that is religious in nature is neither privileged nor penalized when it comes to laws of general applicability. For most purposes of public policy, that is a useful view. In effect, it makes nugatory the religion clause, which, it can be argued on a strictly historical reading, had no purpose but to assure the states that the federal government would neither establish a national religion nor interfere with those established by states. Some of us contend, however, that the original understanding included more than that. The religion clause, with its no-establishment and free exercise provisions, implicitly acknowledges an authority higher than the state, and, correlatively, privileges an appeal to that Higher Authority. This is the rationale evident in, for instance, Madison's *Memorial and Remonstrance*. These are, admittedly, tangled questions on which mountains of books have been written, and about which we will likely never reach a satisfactory resolution. President Bush's initiative represents a moment of historic importance in thinking and policy relative to religion and public life. If it goes down to defeat, the loss will be severe, and the radically secularist proponents of the naked public square will be strengthened. Right now, it seems to me, our job is to support the initiative. Later we can argue about whether it should have been called the Office on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, and we have the rest of our lives to argue about the correct understanding of the First Amendment.

■ The ELCA Lutherans met in August, if not august, assembly and narrowly elected Mark Hanson, who had been bishop of the St. Paul Area (Minnesota), as its presiding bishop. He was widely perceived as the liberal candidate, although he made a strong pitch for evangelism, and the assembly approved a task force to come up with a comprehensive evangelism strategy in the next two years. The initiative is called *Toward a Vision for Evangelism in the ELCA*, which sounds a little like a task force to develop an approach to foreplay. One notes, in addition, that it is usually thought that evangelism is "in the world." But apparently the idea is to start where they are, and there's no doubt much to be said for that. Meanwhile, the ELCA speaks of its continuing decline in membership as "virtual stability." The assembly also approved ordinations under "unusual circumstances," meaning that, in violation of the recent agreement with the Episcopal Church, some pastors will be ordained without bishops claiming episcopal succession. The Episcopalians have already made clear their unhappiness with that. The gay and lesbian agenda was a big presence at the assembly and made significant gains. A motion to simply go ahead and ordain sexually active gays and lesbians failed, but another official study of the matter was approved and its recommendations will be brought to the 2005 assembly. At present there is a de facto "local option" on the matter, and such ordinations are happening, more or less with impunity. Support for gay advocacy grows, writes Russell Saltzman, Editor of *Forum Letter*. "That sympathy will only increase because the gay lobby is organized, financed, and politically clever. [Its members] confront no organized opposition. They are determined to press their agenda. More, they are

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the only interest group willing to break the ELCA—an estimated loss of one to two million members—in order to have their way." For those who care about the theological heritage of Lutheranism, Christian witness in culture, and the unity of Christians, it was, all in all, a disappointing assembly. But not, one must add, surprising. At its convention held a few weeks earlier, the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) declared the ELCA not to be an orthodox Lutheran body. That the Missouri Lutherans thought that is no surprise; that they said it, officially and overwhelmingly, struck some as being not very nice. The Missouri Synod rather prides itself on being an exception to what John Murray Cuddihy memorably described in *No Offense* as the "Protestant etiquette of niceness."

■ The Catholic Health Association (CHA) says that it combines "the strength of two thousand Catholic health care sponsors, systems, facilities, and related organizations." CHA president, Father Michael Place, has announced that they have hired Fr. Kevin O'Rourke, who is described as a "distinguished ethicist," as consultant with specific responsibility to assist members "with ethics and canon law issues, particularly as they relate to arrangements with other-than-Catholic organizations." (What happened to simple "non-Catholic"?) Fr. O'Rourke has distinguished himself as an advocate of, inter alia, withdrawing food, water, and other support from patients who are severely brain-injured. In the controversy over one much-publicized case, Fr. O'Rourke questioned the obligation even to spoon-feed the patient. In an interview with *Our Sunday Visitor*, he asked, "What would be the sense, if she's not going to recover?" and went on to define recovery as the ability "to know, love, relate to people." It seems that other-than-Catholic, non-Catholic, and anti-Catholic institutions might find in Fr. O'Rourke an amenable interlocutor.

■ Megachurches, as they are called, require mega-solutions. When it was communion Sunday at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, Kentucky, it took seven volunteers thirty hours to fill the 350 trays of individual shot glasses, as they are somewhat irreverently called, with grape juice. Until, that is, inventor Wilfred Greenlee joined the church and cut the preparation time down to an hour and a half. I quote: "The Greenlee Communion Dispensing Machine is made of a stainless steel bucket with forty plastic tubes that run through a sheet of Plexiglas into the cups of a communion tray. A push of a lever on the side allows just enough juice to fill each cup half full." A communion dispensing machine. The phrase has possibilities. Mr. Greenlee's invention, however, takes second place to a news story from Denmark a couple of years ago reporting that a church was mailing communion in little plastic containers, thus both dispensing communion and dispensing with the troublesome community of believers that is the Church. In two thousand years we have learned a thing or two about efficiency.

■ This from the *Seattle Times*: "Seattle has the smallest percentage of children of any big city in the country except for San Francisco." Seattle is truly Bobo paradise, "a sanctuary for professionals too busy to raise families." The report says that otherwise thriving neighborhoods "have become virtual child-free zones where kids make up less than 10 percent of the population." San Francisco at least has an excuse, of sorts.

■ Since the Holocaust is as close as our culture has to an undisputed image of evil, it is not surprising that aggrieved parties try to hitch a ride on it. Remember Pastor Martin Niemöller's much quoted statement about how he didn't speak up for others and therefore when the Nazis came there was nobody to speak up for him. Niemöller was reportedly irritated when, years later, people smuggled Catholics, social democrats, gays, gypsies, and even skinheads into the quotation. He was especially unhappy about the inclusion of Catholics, first, because the Nazis came for the Protestants first, and, second, because he in fact did speak up for persecuted Catholics. Asked in 1971 about the correct version of the quote, Niemöller said he was not quite sure when he had said the famous words but, if people insist upon citing them, he preferred this version:

> In Germany, they came first for the Communists,
> And I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist;
>
> And then they came for the trade unionists,
> And I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist;
>
> And then they came for the Jews,
> And I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew;
>
> And then . . . they came for me . . .
> And by that time there was no one left to speak up.

■ The *Daily Telegraph* takes it as good news that more than a third of Britons believe that Jesus rose from the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

dead. But it's a bit more complicated than that. The story is based on a poll done by a magazine that specializes in the paranormal and holds that Jesus was only in a drugged state. The poll asked a thousand people if they thought "Jesus literally rose from the dead exactly as explained in the Bible" or if "there could have been another explanation." In fact, the Bible does not "explain" how Jesus rose from the dead, and one may be forgiven for not knowing how to respond to the ill-posed question. There are reports of his appearances, of the empty tomb, and then Paul's statements in 1 Corinthians 15. The more remarkable finding to be reasonably inferred from the muddled British poll is that more than 80 percent believe that there was a Jesus, that he was crucified, and that he later appeared to the disciples. The interesting disconnect is that so few who claim to believe that gather to celebrate the event with his contemporary disciples. This past Holy Week, the *Spectator* also asked the forty-three diocesan bishops of the Church of England whether they believed in Christ's physical resurrection. Most answered a simple "yes," while the bishops of Bradford, Oxford, and Southwell did not answer at all. Bishop Richard Lewis of St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich responded through his press secretary, "It is immaterial whether Christ was resurrected in body or spirit." In the second case, it is very immaterial indeed.

■ This, I suppose, comes under the heading of closing loopholes. After the Netherlands became the first nation to legalize the killing of the old and not so old who would—in their judgment or in the judgment of a properly authorized party—be better off dead, the minister of health, Mrs. Els Borst-Eilers, has a further proposal. There are some people, she notes, who would prefer to kill themselves rather than depend upon a doctor. She suggests that such people should be provided with a suicide pill. She adds that the provision of the pill should be carefully regulated to ensure that those asking for it really are "tired of life and desperate to die." So how tired are you of life, really? Perhaps some kind of measuring instrument could be devised. One imagines the health minister, eager to share death benefits as equitably as possible, asking herself, "Now, let's see. Have we left anyone out?"

■ Here is an advertisement for what sounds like a good work. "On the coast of Maine, under the supervision of Brother Curry, S.J., students with disabilities bake specialty breads in the Jesuit tradition to support the work of the National Theatre Workshop of the Handicapped." I have remarked on institutions of higher education that advertise themselves as being "in the Jesuit tradition." We may have a clue to the mysterious meaning of that phrase in the breads mentioned in the ad: Irish Soda Bread, Lemon Poppy Bread, Blueberry Ginger Loaf, and Pumpkin Bread. Or maybe it is not that the breads are in the Jesuit tradition but that they are baked in the Jesuit tradition. Or maybe this exegetical exercise is in the Jesuit tradition. In any event, whether it's Pumpkin Bread or higher education, the meaning of "in the Jesuit tradition" remains maddeningly elusive. "A university in the Jesuit tradition." "Pumpkin Bread in the Jesuit tradition." Surely it could be nothing so obvious as simply trading on a name?

■ What do you do if you're an observant Jew and know what God said about graven images, but you still love art? Anthony Julius has come up with an unusual answer in *Idolizing Pictures: Idolatry, Iconoclasm, and Jewish Art* (Thames & Hudson, 120 pp., $16.95 paper). If your art is transgressive enough, if it aims at toppling what others respect and revere (what they "idolize"), then your creative bent is not only permitted; it is very much like a performance of a religious duty. Writing in the *Times Literary Supplement*, Judith Flanders, who also is Jewish, is not persuaded. Julius' argument, she suggests, is self-serving and too clever by half. Moreover, what he calls dissident or iconoclastic art is very much the mainstream today. Julius describes an exhibit that he celebrates and declares it to be "totally dissident art." To which Flanders responds: "Yes indeed, and sponsored by the Herbert F. Johnson Museum of Art, the Goldsen Fund: Images and Society, the NY State Council for the Humanities, the *Ithaca Times*, the Nation Institute, the Alternative Museum, and the Cornell Art Department. Iconoclasts every one."

■ William Galston of the University of Maryland, a "New Democrat" and one-time domestic advisor to President Clinton, is a thoughtful fellow. He spoke recently to a *Commonweal*-sponsored colloquium on Catholics and liberalism. He was supportive of parental rights in education and the right of Catholic hospitals to follow their own moral norms, and said he was "horrified" by the Democratic Party's treatment of the pro-life Pennsylvania Governor Bob Casey at the party's 1992 convention. "I protested against it to no avail. I believe the Democratic Party has made a serious and indeed historic mistake in turning *Roe v. Wade* into a litmus test for party leadership. I can't say it any more flatly than that. Regrettably, I do not expect this to change any time soon. But there are people in positions of leadership in the party who believe it was a mistake." While Galston thinks pro-lifers should be tolerated in the Democratic Party, it

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

seems they should not work to achieve their goals. "It is one thing for Catholics, reasoning within the premises of their community, to reach conclusions about abortion, assisted suicide, and homosexuality that are held to be binding on the faithful; quite another to impose those views on others. Catholics may be affronted by a legal code that permits acts they view as abominable. But in circumstances of deep moral diversity, the alternative to enduring these affronts is even worse." Catholic reasoning about the commonweal is, as Professor Galston should know, not based on premises limited to the Catholic community. And why is protecting the unborn, forbidding euthanasia, and not putting homosexuality on a moral par with marriage and family worse than the alternative? Unless, of course, one favors the alternative supported by those who impose *their* views on others? Galston to Catholics: we welcome you, on our terms. Elsewhere in his talk, William Galston has some thoughtful things to say about the vices of what he aptly calls "exclusionary liberalism." For example, Galston's understanding of who and what is excluded in a circumstance of "deep moral diversity."

■ Correlation? Cause? Coincidence? Distinctions are in order. For instance, there would seem to be a clear causal connection between having an abortion and the incidence of breast cancer. But a pro-life newsletter suggests such a connection also between abortion and the incidence of suicide. Research does indicate that the rate of suicide among women who have had abortions is 7.8 per 100,000, compared with 5.2 for all women aged fifteen to forty-four, and only 3.0 for women who have given birth. It is also true that women who obtain an abortion are much more likely to turn to drug abuse and die in car accidents. But in asking whether the connections are to be explained in terms of correlation, cause, or coincidence, it is well to keep in mind another factor: character. It may be that the kind of woman who is party to the killing of her baby is also prone to drug abuse, reckless driving, and suicide. And it may be that guilt and related inner conflicts connected with abortion lead to the other pathologies. Since a sense of guilt over wrong is a sign of character, it may be that character, in the absence of forgiveness, can also lead to other great wrongs. The connections are, as "experts" inevitably say, complex. What is all too clear is that the many facets of the culture of death are of a piece.

■ On the commanding heights of literary culture, Anne Tyler is not much celebrated. Too bad for the commanding heights of literary culture, says Katherine Whittemore, reviewing Tyler's new book, *Back When We Were Grownups*, in the *Atlantic*. In the *Village Voice*, another writer, Vivian Gornick, criticizes Tyler, claiming that she "mythicizes the inability to give up the family, and because she does her novels do not achieve depth. . . . She allows the middle-brow, middle class to love itself for all its poignant insufficiency." Whittemore thinks that unforgivably smug, writing: "In short, it's a class thing. Not lower class or upper class but wrong class. Tyler doesn't write yuppie fiction or proletariat fiction or confessional fiction. Her characters aren't hip. They struggle, but out of earshot. They are the last people one would see on talk shows, the last people who would go into therapy—no matter how much they might need it. Some of us know such people very well, and to see them explained, even a little, in American literature makes us glad. There's something (I'll just say it) so wonderfully Quaker about Anne Tyler's work, her beautiful but muslin prose, her profound tolerance for her characters, the small-*d* democracy of her vantage point. As Edward Hoagland said, in a review of *Breathing Lessons*, she is someone 'you would want on your jury if you ever had to stand trial.'" Asked about contemporary writing, Tyler once said in an interview, "There aren't enough quiet, gentle, basically good people in a novel." Which leads Whittemore to understanding why she so loves the work of Anne Tyler: "Because no one cares more enduringly about those who, in the end, endure."

■ As you probably know, the British historian David Irving lost his libel suit in a British court against Deborah Lipstadt, who, in her book *Denying the Holocaust*, accuses Irving of doing just that. Now D. D. Guttenplan has published *The Holocaust on Trial*, a detailed account of those proceedings. Writing in the *New Yorker*, Ian Buruma agrees with Guttenplan that organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League make a mistake in demanding that everybody toe the line on Holocaust history. Guttenplan contends that, by turning Holocaust history into a sacred text and equating challenges with blasphemy, by "describing a Holocaust outside politics, by reducing it to good Jews and bad Germans," such people have "made the deniers' task easier." While some distinguished historians respect much of Irving's work, Buruma thinks he is a self-aggrandizing buffoon and liar, but adds that that is no reason to prevent him from making his case, such as it is, in public. That strikes me as precisely right, and precisely because it deprives deniers of their claim that challenges to the received account are not permitted.

■ When asked why he robbed banks, Willie Sutton answered that that's where the money is. When asked why she stayed in a Catholic Church that she thought

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

so awful, Rosemary Radford Ruether is supposed to have answered that that's where the copy machines are, and you can't have a revolution without copy machines. When asked why gay activists are so determined to be Scoutmasters, one possible answer is that that's where the boys are. That answer may be simplistic or unfair, but Leon J. Podles, writing in *Touchstone*, notes that predatory pedophiles have been a chronic problem in Scouting and that, while there is a necessary distinction between homosexuality and pedophilia, the problem is almost always with men who are homosexual. "The age of puberty is falling, and most boys involved in Scouts are sexually mature physically but not emotionally." This makes for a good deal of nervousness. "At one scout camp, we adult leaders noticed that the younger scouts had not bathed for several days, and we herded them to the showers. They insisted on wearing their jeans in the communal shower—while showering! . . . The presence of homosexuals in these situations would make it almost impossible to develop the trust that is necessary for group cohesiveness," Podles writes. "Boys would always be on the lookout for innocent gestures that someone might interpret sexually. Almost all men and boys see any indication of homosexuality as a threat to masculinity, and masculinity is the center of identity for almost all men. Becoming a man and staying a man is not simply a matter of physical growth: a boy must face physical, mental, and moral challenges before he can become a man, a father, and a community leader. Homosexual activists hate the Scouts because the Scouts are the biggest organization dedicated to turning boys into men, and this organization rejects homosexuality because it is incompatible with masculinity. Almost all men, including homosexuals, react violently to having their masculinity impugned, and the mere existence of the Scouts' policy impugns the masculinity of homosexuals." Yet homosexual activists will continue to press, and have already dissuaded some school boards, corporations, and churches from supporting the Boy Scouts because the organization "discriminates" against gays. And the Boy Scouts will no doubt continue to resist the pressure. For the reasons that Podles gives, but also because almost all parents want the assurance that nobody is going to mess around with their sons. For reasons that have nothing to do with bigotry, they do not want their sons messed with, and they do not want their sons to be homosexual. If they turn out to be that way, most parents will still love them, but they pray and do what they can in the hope of being spared that duty. And that is why the Boy Scouts and the homosexual movement, each operating by its own values and its own interests, are locked in an uncompromisable standoff.

■ Perhaps we should not be surprised that so many people, and not only Lutherans, are so very interested in claiming that the Joint Declaration on Justification reflects no real agreement between Lutherans and Catholics. Writing in the *Tablet*, Bruce Marshall of Southern Methodist reflects on that claim. (The kicker is in the last sentence, but don't skip the rest.): "The declaration's detractors assume that such differences matter enough to override any agreement which both traditions might accept. On assumptions like these, it seems as though Lutherans and Catholics could reach consensus on justification only by wholly adopting the views of one or another school of Lutheran theology. Given the requirements imposed by some of the declaration's opponents, it is not clear that an American who observed that the temperature was 32 degrees Fahrenheit and a Frenchman who observed that it was O degrees Celsius could claim to have achieved a consensus. Consensus could only result if the American dropped his own way of measuring temperatures and agreed henceforth to do it the French way. The document declared that there is unanimity between Lutherans and Catholics on the most basic elements of the doctrine of justification. Regarding a number of specific points traditionally in dispute, it argues that while a substantial overlap obtains between the two traditions (often unnoticed in historical polemics), noteworthy differences of outlook and theological formulation also remain. In at least one case it grants that the two traditions may simply disagree. Because they are limited by a wider and more basic agreement, these differences and even disagreements are 'acceptable': they need not divide the Church. On every doctrinal matter (think of the Trinity or the Incarnation), different and sometimes conflicting schools of thought and interpretation have generally flourished within the Christian community, and the Church has seen little need to resolve these differences where there was basic doctrinal agreement. The joint declaration poses to us Lutherans a challenge unlike any we have confronted since the sixteenth century. Then Rome's rejection of our predecessors' teaching on justification forced them to decide whether they must live in separation from the rest of the Western Church. Now, Rome's acceptance of that teaching forces us to decide whether we will go on seeking new ways to disagree about justification, so that this separation may endure, or whether we will do our part to end it."

■ Seeing what we want to see, and vice versa, is wonderfully convenient, and human beings are wonderfully good at it. *The Collapse of Communism*, edited by Lee Edwards and published by Hoover

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Press, includes essays on Western intellectuals and religious figures who, when it came to the Soviet Union, were especially skilled in selective perception. Paul Hollander quotes this fine passage by Malcolm Muggeridge: "There were earnest advocates of the humane killing of cattle who looked up at the massive headquarters of the OGPU [the political police] with tears of gratitude in their eyes, earnest advocates of proportional representation who eagerly assented when the necessity of the Dictatorship of the Proletariat was explained to them, earnest clergymen who walked reverently through anti-God museums . . . earnest pacifists who watched delightedly tanks rattle across Red Square . . . earnest town-planning specialists who stood outside overcrowded ramshackle tenements and muttered: 'If only we had something like this in England!'"

■ Historian Christopher Dawson is among those who have described how Western civilization was formed by Christianity and, more specifically, Christian liturgy. The forming and transforming of culture was also the concern of the Catholic liturgical renewal in the early twentieth century. Monsignor M. Francis Mannion, editor of *Antiphon*, the excellent journal of the Society for Catholic Liturgy, reflects on why that vision has borne so little fruit: "This was, I believe, the vision with which those who prepared for Vatican II approached the task of liturgical reform. But something changed radically after the Second Vatican Council. With the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, the Church began to regard modern cultural conditions and patterns much more optimistically. The ability to read and serve the 'signs of the times' provided a new openness to modernity. Now the Church began to regard itself as the servant of the world. This was and continues to be a legitimate evangelical stance of the Church. But it has severe downsides that have become apparent only in recent times. Instead of ecclesial and liturgical institutions serving to transform society, the reverse occurred: the culture overwhelmed the structures of Catholicism. The dynamics of individualism, secularization, and ideology took hold in the latter. The vision of the liturgy generating and forging social renewal was buried under the power of modern culture. While there continues to be much energetic discussion today about the commitment to justice in the Church, this discussion does not appear to be matched with effective results. Notably absent in such discussion is the vision of the social and cultural power of the liturgy proposed by Dawson and embodied in the key figures of the modern liturgical movement. Nowadays, when issues of justice and social renewal are raised in Catholic liturgical life, they are less about the need for the intrinsically transforming dynamics of the Mass and the sacraments being released and prophetically enacted in society than about 'progressive' social agendas being imposed on and given a forum in the liturgy. Not surprisingly, there is today little that is distinctive in the popular Catholic liturgical 'voice' on the ills that plague the present-day social and cultural arenas." Both "conservatives" and "progressives," Mannion believes, have been excessively preoccupied with fiddling with this liturgical change or that. "The obsession with internal ritual reform," he concludes, "must of necessity give way to what was the most compelling ideal of over a century of liturgical reform: the restoration of all things in Christ."

■ "It's clear that a profession that fails to capture the imagination of a younger generation is in great danger," writes David J. Wood in the *Christian Century*. The number of ordained clergy in mainline/oldline denominations who are under age thirty-five is disturbingly low. In the United Church of Christ it is 4 percent, Disciples of Christ, 3.7; Episcopal Church, 3.9; ELCA Lutheran, 6.1; and for United Methodists it is 6.7 percent. "Clearly," writes Wood, "something is going on in church and society to make pastoral ministry an unappealing profession to many young people." Wood concludes that "younger pastors are not the future of the Church—they are the present by which its future will be shaped." According to a study by the Auburn Center for the Study of Theological Education, the average age of those entering seminary is 39.7 for Catholics, 37.8 for mainline Protestants, 33.3 for evangelical Protestants, and 29.8 for Jewish seminaries. That compares with an average age of 26 for entering law school students and 24.3 for medical students. In mainline Protestant schools, half the students are women and of all students 80 percent say they are preparing for a "religious profession" but only 60 percent plan to be ordained. Across the board, the "clergy shortage" is much more severe for mainline Protestants than for Catholics, in part because Catholics tend to belong to larger parishes, while more Protestants belong to small churches that cannot attract or support a minister. Such comparative data do not jibe with the claim of some Catholics that the priest shortage can be resolved by ordaining married candidates and, were it possible, women. For all Christians, the challenge is to help young people discern a vocation to lifelong ministry.

■ The Unborn Victims of Violence Act is a matter of simple justice but, yes, the pro-abortionists are right in thinking that it is also intended as a step toward legal recognition of the humanity of the unborn child. The

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

inherent mendacity of the pro-abortion position seeps into everything its proponents touch, and among the consequences is hopelessly confused and dishonest language. Thus an editorial in the *New York Times*, "Reproductive Rights Under Attack," allows that "violence against women that results in compromising a pregnancy is a terrible crime." Compromising a pregnancy? As when a mother smokes a cigarette or takes that second glass of wine? No, the Act is aimed at people whose violence against women kills their babies. But, entangled as it is in the mendacity of its position, the *Times* can say nothing straight out. So we get this: "In essence, the bill would elevate the status of a fetus, embryo, or other so-called 'unborn' to that of a 'person' by amending the federal criminal code to add a separate offense for causing death or bodily injury to a 'child' who is 'in utero.'" The *Times* stylebook proscribes using "so-called" before a phrase in quotes, but abortion is the exception to all the rules, whether of style or sanity. Or perhaps that should be "style" or "sanity."

■ Debate continues to rage over President Bush's program for faith-based organizations (FBOs). That rigidly Calvinist voice, *Nicotine Theological Journal*, joins in with the argument that what the government wants to assist churches in doing they shouldn't be doing in the first place. (Note that "rigidly" is not intended as an insult. In those Calvinist circles, rigidity is deemed a virtue.) Allen E. Rich writes: "In the end, FBOs are misnamed because they are premised more on works than on faith. After all, the services the government wants from churches are not forgiveness of sins, perseverance in adversity, or acknowledgment of God's sovereignty—services that nurture a recognition of human inability to overcome the deep residue of sin that still exists in the world. Instead, what the government wants from the churches is not simply a message of uplift but also the skills to make that elevation possible. It's as if the old Protestant distinction between justification and sanctification has been washed away because the government likes the sanctification part and wants to encourage holiness in all citizens. This may explain why Roman Catholics are as encouraged as they are over the Bush Administration's initiative." Forget the anti-Catholic slap. In fact, Catholics have, all in all, been less enthusiastic than evangelical Protestants about the Bush initiative, in part because their parish structures less readily lend themselves to the kinds of programs for which it is designed. Allen concludes: "The genuinely compassionate program to support, then, is one that requires churches to continue to forgive the sins of those who truly repent and believe. In fact, making sinners right with God is an initiative that makes cleaning up cities, winning the war on drugs, or bringing a halt to high school shootings look like a piece of cake." It is good to be reminded that the Church's primary mission is gospel word and sacrament, and everyone knows that there are problems to be sorted out in connection with the third part of Bush's initiative, the direct funding of services under religious auspices. But the first two parts—eliminating discrimination against religious organizations and changing the tax code to encourage voluntary support for them—are long overdue reforms deserving of wholehearted support. Even the curmudgeonly virtuous editors of *Nicotine Journal* should recognize that. (And yes, they also think curmudgeonliness is a virtue.)

■ Much like almost everything else in life, literacy is a mixed bag. During the cold war, Communist regimes boasted of the high literacy rate they had achieved, but, even if true, it was a limited good since people could not read anything deviating from the party line. It may also be that more Americans are reading books, but then consider what they choose to read. According to *Publishers Weekly*, here are the authors of books that were on the top ten best-sellers list during the 1940s (asterisk indicates several times): Ernest Hemingway,* John Steinbeck,* Van Wyck Brooks, William L. Shirer, John Gunther,* Winston Churchill, Pearl S. Buck, William Saroyan, W. Somerset Maugham, John Hersey,* Sinclair Lewis, James Hilton, Richard Wright, James Thurber, Daphne du Maurier, Erich Maria Remarque, Norman Mailer, John O'Hara. Here is the list for the 1970s: Ernest Hemingway, Graham Greene, John Updike, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Chaim Potok, Gore Vidal, Kurt Vonnegut, E. L. Doctorow, Saul Bellow, J. R. R. Tolkien, John Le Carré,* Anaïs Nin, William Styron. As for the years 1990-1998? Here are the best-selling authors: John Grisham, Stephen King, Danielle Steel, Michael Crichton, Tom Clancy, Mary Higgins Clark. Of the fifty best-selling books of the decade, forty-one were written by these six authors. No, of course I'm not against literacy, but much like everything else in life . . .

■ Gara LaMarche, who works for the Open Society Institute funded by George Soros, takes out after publications of the conservative Manhattan Institute. "In the end," she writes in the *Nation*, "what [these books] demonstrate is just how bereft of ideas—that is, beyond trashing public institutions and blaming the poor for their poverty—the right is at this moment. That's the good news. The bad news is: they're running the country." Along the way, LaMarche writes: "It's hard to take seriously

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

intellectuals who, in their ideological zeal to discredit government, ignore all contrary evidence: rural electrification programs that transformed the lives of Southern farm families from their medieval rhythms; the Social Security system, which put an end to the grinding poverty that darkened the final years of millions of elderly citizens; the GI Bill, which subsidized education for a generation of veterans, propelling them into the middle class." TVA, Social Security, GI Bill. It all seems like it was just yesterday. Who is it that has run out of ideas?

■ In 1967, Father Theodore Hesburgh of the University of Notre Dame led the heads of Catholic universities and colleges in issuing the Land O'Lakes statement, a declaration of institutional (and intellectual?) independence from the Church. More than twenty years later, John Paul II issued *Ex Corde Ecclesiae* (From the Heart of the Church), calling upon Catholic schools of higher education to be vibrantly Catholic. After a decade of toing and froing, the U.S. bishops have finally come up with guidelines for implementing *Ex Corde*, including a way to ensure that those who claim to be teaching Catholic theology are, as advertised, teaching what the Church teaches. There is skepticism, bordering on cynicism, on all sides. Supporters of *Ex Corde* say the guidelines are loaded with loopholes that virtually invite bishops to do nothing about determined dissent, while opponents decry the threatened destruction of academic freedom and call for resistance to the death. Kenneth D. Whitehead, who has followed these disputes over the years, offers in the quarterly of the Fellowship of Catholic Scholars what I think is a well-balanced judgment: "The thing is now an accomplished fact. The future policy and plans for Catholic higher education in the United States henceforth amount to the policy and plans which the bishops themselves have now put in place. Contrary to what the academics have tried to maintain all along, the principle has been established and affirmed that the Catholic Church in the United States *does* exercise oversight responsibilities over Catholic colleges and universities and over the teaching of theology. In the long term this is going to be a hard fact to ignore. Nobody can any longer credibly invoke the Land O'Lakes Statement as the model for Catholic universities, for example. This has been almost ritually done for more than thirty years. But now, Land O'Lakes has been officially laid to rest. By itself this is no mean accomplishment."

■ Recall Ronald Reagan's formula for negotiating arms agreements with the Soviets: "Trust, but verify." In similar vein is a new book by Arlene G. Dubin, *Prenups for Lovers: A Romantic Guide to Prenuptial Agreements* (Villard). It's described this way: "This step-by-step handbook shows how to create a fair, balanced, and loving prenuptial agreement. Legal, financial, and psychological sources contribute to the discussion of finances, future goals, and what each partner should expect from marriage." Building a house of romance on a foundation of suspicion.

■ There are nice things to be said about Father Andrew Greeley, and I recently said some of them ("That Loud-Mouthed Irish Priest," Public Square, April). But he doesn't make it easy. Fr. Greeley makes much of the fact that he is a sociologist, or, as he prefers, social *scientist*. But consider the science of this argument in his column in the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Once again, we are told that the encyclical *Humanae Vitae* on sexuality and reproduction was the great turning point of the last century. Among its consequences, according to Greeley, is that Catholics stopped confessing their sexual sins, because they no longer thought they were sins, and pretty much stopped going to confession altogether. Greeley writes: "The Vatican always has blamed this change on dissident theologians. However, neither the laity or the clergy read theologians. The change welled up out of a dramatic shift in the attitude toward sin and sex and marriage at the grass roots of the Church and gradually spread to attitudes toward other aspects of Catholic sexual teaching. Catholics were and are now making up their own minds on what is sinful in sexual behavior and what is not." Now it is true that relatively few lay people or clergy read theologians, but a social scientist should know that ideas do not come out of nowhere. The same lay people and clergy do read what the media say that theologians (and even sociologists) say. Some sociologists (and even theologians) write columns in the popular press, urging Catholics to make up their own minds about what is and what is not moral and to resist, as Fr. Greeley puts it, the magisterium's "effort to reassert Church control over the intimate lives of the laity." In sum, Fr. Greeley has published countless—well, he may keep count—books, articles, and columns explaining why Catholics should ignore the Church's teaching on sexual morality and then reports that alienation from that teaching somehow "welled up" at "the grassroots." This is excessive modesty on his part. It is also implausible as social science. Some might go so far as to say it is disingenuous.

■ The Barna Research Group out in Ventura, California, regularly sends out these releases with semi-zany headlines. Recently there was "More Americans Are Seeking Net-Based Faith Experiences."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Their study "projects that within this decade as many as fifty million individuals may rely solely upon the Internet to provide all of their faith-based experiences." Net-based, faith-based, whatever. I suppose President Bush's initiative has stuck us with this "faith-based" language, chosen in place of "religion-based," which, it is thought, would have pushed too many secularist buttons. But the Internet providing faith-based experiences is something else. I recall from many years ago a television ad in which a very proper fellow with a British accent was promoting an LP record that cost $19.95 and contained, he said, "all the classical music your family will ever need." The Internet: all the faith-based experiences you will ever need.

■ Documents newly released by the U.S. State Department reveal that Pope Paul VI wanted to make a pastoral visit to Vietnam at Christmas of 1968. The idea was to visit both Saigon and Hanoi, but the Communists in the North rejected the proposal, and the Pope, understandably, did not want to appear to be taking sides by visiting only the South. Who knows what difference such a visit might have made? Possibly none, but then . . .

■ Livers, kidneys, hearts, and other parts are all in fierce demand. Secretary Tommy Thompson of Health and Human Services is launching a program to boost organ donations. The problem is that the demand is encouraging the health industry and its paid ethicists to loosen the definition of death in order to get more organs and get them earlier. Potential donors who are seriously ill may discover that getting the care they need is trumped by hastening their gift. There is, for instance, a Pittsburgh medical center operating with guidelines that permit disabled people who are not terminally ill or catastrophically brain-damaged to become organ donors if they need a ventilator for survival. Diane Coleman, founder of a disability rights organization Not Dead Yet, says, "Allowing disabled people to believe they are being altruistic by consenting to organ donation will only increase the pressure on disabled people to choose to die in the belief that by giving up their organs their lives can have some meaning. The danger is especially acute for people who are newly disabled, many of whom believe falsely that their lives can never again be worth living." Promoting organ donations is fine, writes Wesley J. Smith in the *Weekly Standard*, but the public must be assured that the protocols for procuring organs do not involve the hastening of death. Without that solid assurance, fewer and fewer people will sign up as donors.

■ "Banned in Melbourne!" It doesn't have quite the cache of being banned in Boston, but Crossroad Publishing, a progressive font of books promoting the Catholic revolution that was not to be, has to make do with what they have. And what they have is a book, *Is Jesus God?*, by Michael Morwood, a former priest whose earlier book, *Tomorrow's Catholic*, was, we are told, "banned by the Archbishop of Melbourne." I'll admit that Archbishop George Pell (now of Sydney) is a formidable figure, but I very much doubt that he has the power to prevent any misguided souls in Melbourne who want to get Mr. Morwood's book from doing so. What Archbishop Pell did was to point out that Mr. Morwood's views do not reflect the teaching of the Church. Which is precisely what Mr. Morwood says is the case. The Archbishop was simply agreeing with him. Why can't these people take yes for an answer?

■ *A cry rises up from the world: a new cry among all the old human cries . . .*

Who is crying?

They tell us it is the "working class," the "proletariat," the "masses."
We are looking for the person who is crying.
And they point to a universal idea.
Ideas don't cry. . . .

The cry of death and the cry of love will never come to an end. But we know too that there exist cries that can be cured, cries for which our actions and omissions are responsible.

Is this new cry one of those that can be healed?
Someone is crying in the night—how can we go on sleeping?

Madeleine Delbrel was a poet and militant atheist who was converted at age twenty and in 1933 founded a "gospel community" in the French village of Ivry, which was a center of Communist hostility to the Church. Her devotion to the poor and Catholic piety brings Dorothy Day to mind, but her reflections are more allusive and her aversion to engagement in partisan politics more intense. *We, the Ordinary People of the Streets* (Eerdmans) brings together poetry and other writings not previously published, making a book that, as Hans Urs von Balthasar says in his brief preface, requires and rewards slow reading and a readiness for adventurous thought.

■ "The Great Mystery of Existence, as I said, glared in upon him; with its terrors, with its splendors; no

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

hearsays could hide that unspeakable fact, 'Here am I!'" Thus did Carlyle describe Allah's revelation to Muhammad. Reviewing current books on the birth of Islam and its terrifying conquests, Robert Irwin writes: "It is noticeable that several of the deconstructive academics . . . have got rid of the exciting battles and miracles and, in their place, have proposed an early history of Islam whose development seems to be modeled on academic life. In that version, the religion seems to have evolved very slowly as the product of interfaith seminars and colloquia largely conducted between intelligent textual critics and exegetes, and 'the great Mystery of Existence,' which was so evident to Carlyle, has been conjured away."

■ James Lord is an art historian and was a friend of Pablo Picasso until breaking with him in 1956 when Picasso refused to condemn the Soviet invasion of Hungary. He reviews Gertje Utley's *Picasso: The Communist Years* (Yale), and is sharply critical of the author's failure to even attempt to explain the artist's allegiance to the most brutal regime in human history. In 1944, after the liberation, Paris held a monster exhibition of Picasso's work, and a day before it opened Picasso announced he had joined the Communist Party. As Lord notes, this caused an enormous stir, greatly increasing interest in the exhibition. From then until his death in 1973, Picasso remained loyal to communism—despite the show trials, the murder of five million kulaks, the death of as many as forty million in the Gulag, and the bloody repressions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia. Weeks after the Soviet repression of the forlorn insurgents of Hungary, while the summary executions were still going on, Picasso told a journalist, "Communism represents a certain ideal in which I believe. I think that communism works toward the realization of that ideal." Lord comments: "What he believed this ideal to be he never troubled to define. That he actually swallowed the vicious lie of the Soviet utopia is inconceivable. But he would not renounce it. The ideal, all in all, was the ideal of the self; the infallible, immaculate, supreme quintessence of Picassian mythology by which he had lived for so long that he could not repudiate it without disowning himself, since everything pertaining to that self had become indispensable to it." If we care about art, says Lord, if we care about the culture of the century past, we have to wonder about Picasso and his influence. "And we *are* interested, because Picasso's work is more absolutely inseparable from his life than that of any artist we can readily call to mind. Thus, we have no choice but to take serious account of his personal beliefs and their meaning. The integrity of Picasso as a man as well as an artist is ineluctably at stake in any consideration of his political commitment, because he went very far out of his way to leave his worldwide public no choice in the matter. Since the climactic years of his life were devoted without dissent to the cause of a brutally repressive regime which obliterated not only the freedom but the very lives of men and women of genius, not to speak of millions of others, we cannot absolve him of gross guilt. The man hailed as champion of victims of totalitarian aggression became, in fact, a callous, cynical, hypocrite, an impostor and a traitor to his own supreme talent. He made a truly Faustian bargain but was not rewarded with the innocent beauty of youth or the refreshed vigor of authentic genius. On the contrary, as he grew old, his work became weak and meretricious. His so-called 'Temple of Peace' is a huge and vapid cartoon, the Picassian 'versions' of great works by great masters of the past are sloppy demonstrations of frustration, and the scores of etchings executed in his final years are pseudo-Goyaesque images of rage, bitterness, and dread of death. And yet, he is still with us. His museum in Paris attracts crowds of tourists. Automobiles manufactured yesterday bear reproductions of his signature as trademarks. Images from his work decorate neckties, ashtrays, matchboxes, jewelry, and assorted knick-knacks, not to mention zillions of postcards. Picasso's cash never ceases to multiply itself. The mortal man may be dead, but the Midas touch lives on. Not long ago a painting of the Blue Period, and not a very fine one, sold at auction for $55 million (twice the price of a fine Rembrandt); Picasso would have been ecstatic. Money is love, money is fame, and all his life he cherished both."

■ Recall that election 2000 map that showed the country split 50-50 with the Democrat blue sections along the coasts, with a few blue patches in the Midwest, and the rest of the nation in Republican red. Not since the Civil War have Americans been so dramatically divided along the lines of parties that are themselves divided by moral-cultural differences. In such a circumstance, it is hard to speak of what "the American people" or "the public" want. Our parish newsletter, however, is blithely indifferent to the problem. Here is a *Times* editorial titled "The GOP's Unsung Centrists." Never mind that the editors never cease to sing the praises of Republican liberals, who are, of course, always referred to as "moderates" or "centrists," as distinct from the "conservatives," "right-wingers," and "ideologues" who control the party. The interesting thing here is what the editors take to be "the public." The point of the editorial is that Bush is wrong and the Republican "moderates" are right on campaign finance reform (a.k.a. giving politicians and the media control of political speech) and the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

environment. The editors conclude with this: "In both cases, a cluster of moderate Republicans is likely to be at odds with the White House. In both cases, however, the moderates are likely to have the public, including a large slice of the GOP voters, on their side." So there you have it. Is the public divided 50-50 between the reds and the blues? Nonsense. The blues are "the public." And, with the help of Republican liberals, it may be possible to get some reds to join "the public." What are they drinking over there on West 43rd Street? You may well ask.

■ Thomas Winning, Cardinal Archbishop of Glasgow, Scotland, has died. A friend once described him to me as "the UK's John O'Connor." Like the late Archbishop of New York, Winning was in some ways a man of the left, deeply rooted in the culture of working people and instinctively on the side of labor against management. He had the common touch and cherished the tribute of a worker who said, "Whit I like about you is that you hae nae dignity." Also like O'Connor, he was first of all a man of the Church who bore uncompromising witness to Christian teaching and, as a consequence, was regularly referred to as "controversial." Jonathan Sacks, Chief Rabbi of the British Commonwealth, described him as "a man of principle and moral courage who never bent his messages to the wind of political correctness." John Haldane, philosopher at the University of St. Andrews, writes in the *Tablet* that Winning was always "attentive to the distinction between objective values and principles and subjective circumstances, recognizing this as essential to sound moral theology and to pastoral practice." In season and out, Haldane writes, Winning "challenged new orthodoxies as well as old heresies, and Scotland is a better country for his life." Thomas Joseph Winning. *Requiescat in pace.*

■ You perhaps know the haunting lamentation of Mary at the cross in Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater,* a painfully beautiful piece of music. The New York City Ballet took it on with, in the words of *New York Times* reviewer Jack Anderson, "choreography that avoids overtly religious references." The Stabat Mater without mother or son or crucifixion. This is creativity of a high order. Instead, the ballet has three couples, including the dancer Darci Kistler, gathering at a countryside ruin where they wonder about the sadness of the place. Mr. Anderson writes, "Before the ballet ended, Ms. Kistler seemed to have been seized by deep and inexplicable feelings of grief." Her grief would be more explicable, and Pergolesi's undoubted grief reduced, if the bowdlerized production did not suppress the offending content of *Stabat Mater.* Add to the naked public square the naked City Ballet.

■ There has been a slew of books this past year honoring that doyen of twentieth-century anthropology, Clifford Geertz. Admittedly, some thank him for services rendered in the distant past, but leave no doubt that they have left him far behind. For sundry radicals of a feminist and deconstructionist stripe, Geertz has long since been displaced by the likes of Foucault who claim that culture is not about meaning but about power. In this view, the task is to decode the symbols of hegemony, oppression, and victimization, and so forth. The very word "culture" has, of course, been used as a pointer to anything and everything, with the result that it sometimes seems to mean nothing. In his enormously influential 1973 book *The Interpretation of Cultures,* Geertz settled on the argument that "culture" should be used to refer to the meaningful symbols that people in society use to make their lives intelligible to themselves, and said that the anthropologist's task is to interpret these symbols, much as a literary critic's task is to interpret literature. The great influence of Geertz, says T. M. Luhrmann writing in the *Times Literary Supplement,* is in part because he writes so well. He quotes this example: "The culture of a people is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong." Luhrmann observes that the anthropologist must cultivate a certain detachment, which is neither the scientistic abandonment of moral vision nor the subjectivist triumph of a sense of moral superiority. Geertz wrote, "Detachment comes not from a failure to care, but from a kind of caring resilient enough to withstand an enormous tension between moral reaction and scientific observation." Geertz, refracted through and tempered by the sociologist Peter Berger, has been formative in my own thinking. It is almost a mantra of this journal: *Politics is in largest part a function of culture; at the heart of culture is morality; and at the heart of morality are the commanding truths we call religion.* In addition to Geertz and Berger, Paul Tillich contributed significantly to my understanding of that formula. But I have to mention also Russell Kirk, following T. S. Eliot, following Christopher Dawson, who persistently returned to the insight that "culture" is derived from "cult." To know a people is to know what they worship. The ensemble of texts is finally liturgical, whether or not it is designated as such. We read over the shoulders of people kneeling to that which provides ultimate meaning, which is meaning in the face of death—death otherwise being the obliteration of meaning. Ethnologists typically stop short of that insight. Berger says somewhere, perhaps in *The Rumor of Angels,* that culture is all the little flags we wave in defiance of death. In the same book he suggests that, just maybe,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the flags are not entirely of our own invention, that the rumor of angels, of meaning greater than death, is true. Geertz and others are not indifferent to cult, but it is treated entirely as a social artifact. It is the human effort to make sense of the senseless. The thought is not entertained that cult may be a response to the reality of things knowable by reason and revelation. That, it is said, would be to move into the realm of metaphysics and theology. But not to make that move, to remain scientifically "neutral," is inevitably reductionist; it is to translate (i.e., misread) the ensemble of texts into a meaning other than their own. Even with that misreading, the above-mentioned mantra remains serviceable for many purposes of social analysis. But it is an analysis that falls far short of culture as it is lived.

■ Those who refuse the necessary clamor for the superfluous. That is the insight of the twelfth-century Bernard of Clairvaux. A puff for a new book came across my desk today. It offers a program for "total well-being"—physical, mental, spiritual—along with elaborate guidelines for workout routines, diets, and "totally there" sex. It sounds utterly exhausting in its reach for the superfluous and neglect of the necessary, and the possible. Admittedly, there is a gap between the monks of Clairvaux and how we've ended up today, but Bernard's counsel about the temptations of what he calls the mid-day devil still rings true. The following is from the recently published *The First Cistercian Spiritual Writers* by M.-Andrew Fracheboud (Xlibris):

> How often has he [the devil] suggested to a monk that he should shorten his sleep, in order to make fun of him later, when he saw him sleeping at vigils? How often has the devil inspired a monk to prolong his fasting, in order to make the one whom he had thus weakened all the more useless to the service of God? Out of envy for those who were doing well in the community, how often has he persuaded them to go off into the desert under the pretext that they will thus obtain greater purity? And the wretches have finally seen how true is the saying that they had read in vain: "Woe to him who is alone. If he should fall, he will have no one to lift him up again." How often has the devil urged monks to undertake more manual labor than was necessary and thus made unfit for the exercise of the Rule a man who was exhausted by fatigue? How many monks has he led to participate excessively in corporal practices—which, according to the Apostle, serve no great purpose—in order to frustrate them in their piety? We see among us those who previously and obstinately refused what is necessary . . . now clamouring for the superfluous.

■ Here's a fine little book by the late Basil Cardinal Hume, *The Mystery of Love* (Paraclete). *Publishers Weekly* likes it, too: "Although the Cardinal's perspective is clearly Catholic, his references to his church do not obscure the universality of his message." Some persist in thinking it is His Church, and that catholic *means* universal.

■ Eamon Duffy, the Cambridge historian who is the author of the marvelous book on what is euphemistically called the English Reformation, *Stripping of the Altars*, takes on James Carroll's *Constantine's Sword* in the *New York Review of Books*. Most of what needs to be said about that pretentiously wrongheaded polemic was said in these pages (see Thomas F. X. Noble's review, FT, May), but Duffy puts very nicely what is wrong with Carroll's reconstruction of the New Testament accounts by eliminating the centrality of the cross and proposing that Jesus' "resurrection" was the product of wishful thinking on the part of the disciples. Duffy writes: "All of this may well be perfectly true; it is an account that would be endorsed by many liberal Christians. The thing to note here, however, is that under the guise of commenting on the Christian story, it actually offers a counternarrative, rooted not in Jesus' teaching or in biblical categories at all, but in the language of popular psychotherapy and in a post-Enlightenment conception of what is probable or possible in a world sealed against the supernatural. Carroll feels entirely at ease about proposing a drastic rewriting of the New Testament story. Catholics, after all, he says, reject the absolute authority of Scripture and believe that 'the community has authority over its normative literature,' a formulation which on his account of things appears to mean that the foundation documents of Christianity are infinitely plastic, and ultimately can be dispensed with, whenever they cut across modern understanding of what is decent or likely." Duffy offers a sampling of almost grotesque historical errors in the book and concludes, "In the end, Carroll, for all his intelligence and sensitivity, does not possess the learning or intuition to underpin the wholesale revision of Christian tradition advocated in his book," with the result that *Constantine's Sword* is yet another version of the Christian liberalism repudiated in W. H. Auden's lines:

> *Nothing can save us that is possible:*
> *We who must die demand a miracle.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

■ It would be a very good thing, writes Bruce Bawer in the *New York Times Book Review,* were there a revival of interest in Sigrid Undset, and I warmly agree. Undset was a Norwegian convert to Catholicism who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1928. If you have not read the saga *Kristen Lavransdatter* (be sure to get the T. Nunnally translation), yours is the prospect of delight in a great discovery. Unfortunately, Bawer, author of *A Place at the Table* and apologist for a "conservative" version of the homosexual movement, has to get in some swipes at Undset's alleged views on sexual differences. Already at age nineteen, she wrote to a friend that "most marriages run aground because the two people have tried to know each other too well." Those who have had to deal with marriages running aground may think that an acute observation. But not Bawer, who writes, "What to make of this trailblazing contrarian who, recoiling from what she saw as groupthink, expressed her fierce individuality by sneering at women's rights and preaching the gospel of male as protector?" He thinks the answer may be in one biographer's judgment that Undset was "nearly filled with hate for her own sex." As any reader of *Kristen* or *The Master of Hestviken* will recognize, that is preposterous. I confess that I am influenced on this by no less an authority than my late mother. Undset was probably the last major reading project she undertook a few years before her death at age ninety-four. Never, she declared, had she met an author who so perfectly understood women, marriage, and sex. Of these subjects my mother was no mean student, being married for almost fifty years to a greatly difficult man and rearing eight children. But others with more literary credentials, if not more life credentials, have recognized Undset's courage in clearing her mind of the cant that has, for more than a hundred years, confused the discussion of the sexes. Bawer notes in a parenthesis that Undset became a Catholic in 1924, but her Catholicism was anything but parenthetical. This has been underscored in more recent books, such as J. C. Whitehouse's *Vertical Man: The Human Being in the Catholic Novels of Graham Greene, Sigrid Undset, and Georges Bernanos* (St. Augustine's Press), and *Sigrid Undset: On Saints and Sinners,* edited by Deal Hudson (Ignatius). The place to start, however, is with *Kristen Lavransdatter.* Let the Sigrid Undset revival begin.

■ "*That* was Larkin's problem." So James Fenton, writing in the *New York Review of Books,* concludes a long and condescending essay on Philip Larkin, one of the twentieth century's most noteworthy poets. And what was Larkin's problem? He had, according to Fenton, an exaggerated sense of the transience of things. Fenton invokes the wisdom of Freud, who wrote about two friends who were saddened by the thought that the beauty of the world would one day pass away. "But since the value of all this beauty and perfection is determined only by its significance for our own emotional lives," Freud wrote, "it has no need to survive us and is therefore independent of absolute duration." Narcissism, anyone? Freud goes on: "What spoiled their enjoyment of beauty must have been a revolt in their minds against mourning. The idea that all this beauty was transient was giving these two sensitive minds a foretaste of mourning over its decease; and, since the mind instinctively recoils from anything that is painful, they felt their enjoyment of beauty interfered with by thoughts of its transience." Like so much that Freud wrote, this falls apart upon careful reading. If it is not the transience of things but the thought of the transience of things that causes pain, then the obvious solution is not to think about it. Which is precisely what Fenton says was wrong with Larkin. "It was the looking ahead that was doing the damage." You and all that you value will one day pass away? Don't think about it, says Fenton. That's great counsel from a man who has just published a book titled *The Strength of Poetry.*

■ I remarked on the British regulations that forbid doing anything to make bats feel uncomfortable in church, there often being more bats than people. Some clergy are content simply to grumble about the new rules, but a friend tells me he spoke to one vicar who has found a solution: "I baptize them and then confirm them, and they never come back."

■ A while back I reported the note appended by a scribe to a medieval manuscript, *Nunc Scripsi Totum, Pro Christo Da Mihi Potum.* "Now I have finished writing, for Christ's sake give me a drink." Carl P. Olson of Towson University alerts me to the fact that there are numerous such personal notes, many of them to be found in a book by Marc Drogin, *Anathema: Medieval Scribes and the History of Book Curses.* Father Leonard Kennedy of Toronto has a favorite, found on the last page of a fifteenth-century commentary on Aristotle's *De Anima.* It reads, *Detur scriptori pro penna pulchra puella.* "May there be given the scribe for his pen [his work] a beautiful girl." Fr. Kennedy adds that we must of course assume that the scribe was not a cleric. Of course.

■ At his suggestion, Jim Nuechterlein's editorial column, "This Time," will be opened also to other editors. This time "This Time" is by associate editor, Damon Linker. We had thought of renaming the column "Taking Turns," but I have insisted that "This Time" is still Jim Nuechterlein's column, any time.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

■ "We do carry it, but it sells out fast." That's the answer that more than one reader has received upon asking why a bookstore doesn't carry FT. The trick is not to appear snide or condescending when you make the obvious response that they should order more copies. And, of course, we count on you to know the best way to approach your local public (or university or college or parish) librarian in order to suggest that they subscribe. Many thanks for your help.

■ A reader survey indicates, among other things, that in the last three years the average age of subscribers has increased by one year. Our circulation manager suggested that we should advertise that our subscribers age at one-third the rate of the general population. Anyone who would believe that is not a potential subscriber to FT. To those who you think might be, however, we would be glad to send a sample issue. Please send names and addresses to FIRST THINGS, 156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, New York, 10010 (or e-mail to frth@kable.com). On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call toll free 1-877-905-9920, or visit www.firstthings.com.

Sources: *New York Times* on Jill Stanek, September 8, 2001. WHILE WE'RE AT IT: Terence Kealey on eugenics, *Spectator*, March 17, 2001. Daniel Cere on relationship theories, *Public Interest*, Spring 2001. Confession and "kind" priests, *Catholic Trends*, March 17, 2001. On "faith-based" and community initiatives, *World*, April 21, 2001. The ELCA's "vision," *Forum Letter*, October 2001. On the hiring of Fr. Kevin O'Rourke, CHA press release and *Our Sunday Visitor*, May 19, 1991. On the Greenlee Communion Dispensing Machine, *Cincinnati Enquirer*, March 31, 2001. On child-free Seattle, *Seattle Times*, April 8, 2001. Britons' belief in the resurrection, *Daily Telegraph*, April 12, 2001. Closing legal loopholes in the Netherlands, SPUC Information, April 17, 2001. Baking bread in the Jesuit tradition, *America*, April 16, 2001. Judith Flanders on iconoclasm, *Times Literary Supplement*, April 13, 2001. William Galston on "exclusionary liberalism," *Commonweal*, April 6, 2001. Statistics on abortion and suicide, SPUC Information, April 19, 2001. On Anne Tyler, *Atlantic*, May 2001. D. D. Guttenplan on the Holocaust, *New Yorker*, April 16, 2001. Leon Podles on the Boy Scouts, *Touchstone*, April 2001. Bruce Marshall on the Joint Declaration on Justification, *Tablet*, April 2001. M. Francis Mannion on liturgical reform, *Antiphon*, Vol. 5, No. 3. Mainline ordination numbers, *Christian Century*. April 11, 2001. On the Unborn Victims of Violence Act, *New York Times*, April 26, 2001. *Nicotine Theological Journal* on FBOs, April 2001. Gara LaMarche on running out of ideas, *Nation*, May 7, 2001. On Land O'Lakes statement, *Fellowship of Catholic Scholars Quarterly*, Winter 2001. On Andrew Greeley, *Chicago Sun-Times*, April 29, 2001. On Paul VI visiting Vietnam, *Catholic Trends*, April 28, 2001. The ethics of organ donation, *Weekly Standard*, May 28, 2001. Islam and the "great Mystery of Existence," *Times Literary Supplement*, January 26, 2001. The GOP and "the public," *New York Times*, July 22, 2001. On the death of Thomas Winning, *Tablet*, June 23, 2001. New York City Ballet's *Stabat Mater*, *New York Times*, June 14, 2001. T. M. Luhrmann on Clifford Geertz, *Times Literary Supplement*, January 21, 2001. On Catholic universality, *Publishers Weekly*, August 13, 2001. Eamon Duffy on James Carroll, *New York Review of Books*, July 5, 2001. Bruce Bawer on Sigrid Undset, *New York Times Book Review*, June 3, 2001. James Fenton on Philip Larkin, *New York Review of Books*, April 12, 2001.

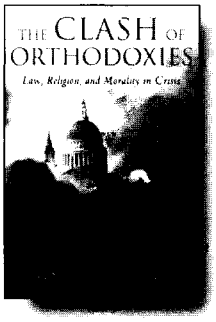
LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Perry, Georgia, 1985

© Sam Fentress

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

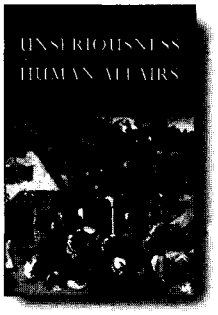
ISI BOOKS New & Recent



THE CLASH OF ORTHODOXIES
Law, Religion, and Morality in Crisis

ROBERT P. GEORGE • *Foreword by* JOHN DIIULIO
$24.95 cloth • 400 pages • 1-882926-62-5 (November)

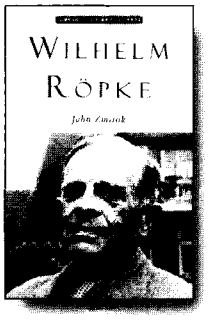
Secular liberals typically suppose that their positions on morally charged public policy issues are the fruit of pure reason, while those of their conservative opponents reflect an irrational religious faith. Princeton legal scholar Robert George shows that this supposition is wrong on both counts. On controversial issues like abortion, euthanasia, and same-sex unions, traditional Judaeo-Christian beliefs are rationally superior to secular liberal alternatives. "George's spirited and rational defense of Judaeo-Christian principles shows why he has become one of America's leading public intellectuals."—**Mary Ann Glendon**, *Learned Hand Professor of Law, Harvard University*



ON THE UNSERIOUSNESS OF HUMAN AFFAIRS
Teaching, Writing, Playing, Believing, Lecturing, Philosophizing, Singing, Dancing

JAMES V. SCHALL, S.J.
$24.95 cloth • 250 pages • 1-882926-63-3 (October)

In this wise and witty book, Georgetown political philosopher James Schall, following Plato, argues that singing, dancing, playing, contemplating, and other "useless" human activities are not merely forms of escape from more important things but an indication of the very nature of the highest things themselves.



WILHELM RÖPKE
Swiss Localist, Global Economist

JOHN ZMIRAK
$24.95 cloth • 240 pages • 1-882926-56-0
$14.95 paper • 240 pages • 1-882926-67-6

Exiled by Hitler's regime, economist Wilhelm Röpke was a passionate critic of socialism who was nonetheless keenly attuned to the limits of capitalism. The author ably demonstrates that Röpke's humane yet sophisticated "Third Way" economics can play a vital role in shaping policies to reflect the growing communitarian consensus. "If any person in our contemporary world is entitled to a hearing it is Wilhelm Röpke."—***The New York Times***

SECURING DEMOCRACY
Why We Have an Electoral College

Edited by GARY L. GREGG II
Introduction by SEN. MITCH MCCONNELL
$24.95 cloth • 200 pages • 1-882926-65-x (Oct.)

The distinguished contributors to this volume—including Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Michael Barone, and Walter Berns—show why it would be folly to abolish the Electoral College by explaining its contemporary role in instilling a measure of stability to our electoral and party systems. This volume also contains an appendix of seminal historical material on the Electoral College.

BONFIRE OF THE HUMANITIES
Rescuing the Classics in an Impoverished Age

VICTOR DAVIS HANSON, JOHN HEATH, *and* BRUCE S. THORNTON
$24.95 cloth • 400 pp. • 1-882926-54-4

The authors see academics themselves as the progenitors of the dismal state of American higher education and call for accessible, unspecialized writing, selfless commitment to students and teaching, and respect for the legacy of freedom that the ancients bequeathed to the West. "The authors are to be commended for their courageous contribution to reform higher education with their collection of essays...."—***Washington Times***

THINGS THAT COUNT
Essays Moral and Theological

GILBERT MEILAENDER
$24.95 cloth • 399 pp. • 1-882926-36-6

"...[Meilaender] writes philosophy that is accessible and profound, besides as religiously informed, as G. K. Chesterton's great journalism of ideas early in this century."—***Booklist*** "Reading these essays is like listening to a conversation that is both brilliant and full of common sense."—***Crisis***

ISI BOOKS

PERENNIAL IDEAS SHAPING OUR AGE *Wilmington, Delaware 19807-0431*

AVAILABLE AT FINE BOOK STORES. *U.S.&Canadian orders: call (800) 621-2736 or fax (800) 621-8476. Foreign orders: call (773) 568-1550 or fax (773) 660-2235. Domestic shipping & handling: $4 for 1st book, $1 for each additional book. Foreign shipping: $5 for 1st book, $1 for each additional book. Order online at: www.isibooks.org*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New from Herder & Herder

Christopher J. Kauffman

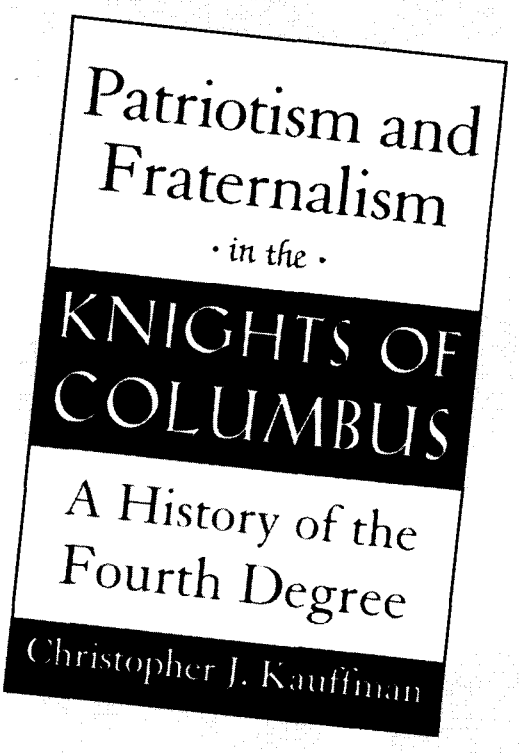
Patriotism and Fraternalism in the Knights of Columbus

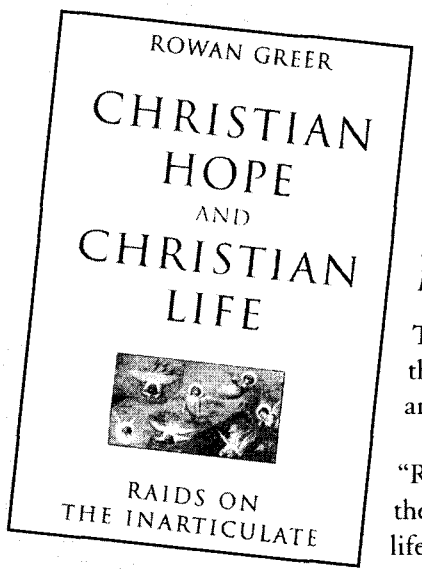
A History of the Fourth Degree

"**A fascinating study** of the most powerful Catholic fraternal organization in the United States. The Knights of Columbus represent an important but often overlooked chapter in the history of American Catholicism. No one knows their history better than Chris Kauffman."
— JAY P. DOLAN, UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

"This lively history [is]... **a 'must-read'** for students of American Catholic history and culture."
— MARK S. MASSA, S.J., FORDHAM UNIVERSITY

0-8245-1885-3, $19.95 hardcover





Find out why *First Things* editorial board member

STANLEY HAUERWAS

calls this new study from Rowan A. Greer "a wonderful book."

Christian Hope and Christian Life

Raids on the Inarticulate

This remarkable book looks at how Christian hope in the "there and then" of future life with God influences our understanding of life here and now.

"Rowan Greer has exceptional ability — a gift — to help us think with the scriptures, with Gregory of Nyssa, with Augustine, about the Christian life. In this wonderful book, he draws on the resources of the Christian tradition to help us see the incoherence of our own lives. Only then will we see why God matters."
— STANLEY HAUERWAS, GILBERT T. ROWE PROF. OF THEOLOGICAL ETHICS, DUKE UNIV. DIVINITY SCHOOL

0-8245-1916-7, $24.95 paperback

THE CROSSROAD PUBLISHING COMPANY 481 Eighth Avenue, Suite 1550, New York, NY 10001
At your local bookstore, or call 1-800-395-0690.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED